The Dissertation Committee for Miguel Antonio Levario certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Cuando vino la mexicanada: Authority, Race, and Conflict in West Texas, 1895-1924

Committee:

Emilio Zamora, Supervisor

Samuel Brunk

José Limón

Anne Martínez

John McKiernen-González

Cuando vino la mexicanada: Authority, Race, and Conflict in West Texas, 1895-1924

by

Miguel Antonio Levario, B.A.; M.A.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2007

Dedication

For my parents, Daniel and Catalina Levario; my brothers, Danny and Rene Levario; and my wife, Susanna Levario

Acknowledgements

This dissertation could not have been written without the assistance and guidance of numerous people and institutions. My journey through this intellectual and personal odyssey began in El Paso, Texas, in the C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department of the University of Texas at El Paso. Ms. Claudia A. Rivers, head librarian of special collections, was especially generous with her time and expertise regarding the Mexican Revolution and the various archives. Their extensive oral history collection was especially valuable. In addition, I am grateful to the conversations and extensive research material presented to me by Mr. Thomas F. Burdett, curator of the military history collection. The topic of militarization discussed in this dissertation was largely shaped by the numerous hours spent in their extensive archive. Also, I would like to thank the staff at the National Border Patrol Museum in El Paso. Their kindness and direction were valuable to this project.

In Austin, Texas, I had the great fortune of having access to extensive resource material at various institutions throughout the city and university. Mr. Brian Schenik of Texas Military Forces Museum and Library at Camp Mabry in Austin was an invaluable source of knowledge regarding Texas' National Guard and military history. His expertise and passion regarding military forces in Texas was a tremendous asset in my research regarding the Guard in El Paso and South Texas. I am especially grateful for his sharing

of personal mementos from guardsmen that included poems, pictures, and song lyrics. They made quite an impression on me and the direction of this dissertation.

I would like to thank the librarians and staff at the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. Their attention to detail and dedication to patrons was exhibited each day I spent sifting through boxes and microfilm. Also, I am indebted to the librarians and staff of the Nettie Lee Benson Library, especially Ms. Margo Gutierrez. Her dedication and support of this project will not be forgotten.

I had the great fortune of receiving generous financial support for the research and development of this project. I am grateful for the support offered to me by Dr. José Limón and the Center for Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Since the beginning of my tenure at the university, Dr. Limón and the center have nurtured and cared for my growth as a scholar and as a man. I am eternally indebted to them.

My dissertation was not only shaped by the institutions and resources I utilized but by the people directly involved in the dissertation process and my growth as a scholar. First, I would like to thank my mentor Dr. Emilio Zamora. He not only served as a supervisor over this project but was a confidant and close friend. Dr. Zamora possesses a selfless attitude and an intense loyalty to his students that is unparalleled. Also, I owe much to the rest of my dissertation committee members, Dr. Anne Martínez, Dr. John McKiernen-Gonzalez, Dr. José Limón, and Dr. Samuel Brunk for their support and advice in furthering this project. I am also thankful for the opportunities afforded me by the history department at the University of Texas at Austin.

This academic journey that was both professional and personal could not have been completed without the love and support of my family and friends. My wife, Susanna Levario, listens to all of my ideas and makes them better with her insight,

compassion, and intellect. My friends and colleagues, especially Rob Garza and Carlos Moreno, are always there to lend their support or order another round of laughs and spirited conversation. Finally, I want to thank my parents and brothers. They remind me that perseverance, dedication, and faith are the way to navigate the roadmap of life.

Cuando vino la mexicanada: Authority, Race, and Conflict in West Texas, 1895-1924

Publication No._____

Miguel Antonio Levario, PhD

The University of Texas at Austin, 2007

Supervisor: Emilio Zamora

This dissertation proposes to explain how militarization during the turn of the twentieth century affected relations in the transnational West Texas region between Mexicans and Anglos and between the United States and Mexico. The study seeks to demonstrate that militarization complicated these relations and deepened racial and international divisions. Within this discussion, the study will also demonstrate that the "border troubles" of the early twentieth century gave shape to an authority structure that was composed of border institutions that sought to pacify the region with ever-increasing vigilance and punitive measures. The result of such measures was a disciplined society that reinforced racial segregation in towns and cities along the border, specifically El Paso.

A case study approach is utilized to highlight specific events, institutions and public figures that contributed to the formation of authority in El Paso. They include the National Guard, the 1916 El Paso race riot, the Texas Rangers, and the Border Patrol.

The affects of developing authority and their institutions on race relations along the U.S.-Mexican divide are addressed. Historians have discussed various aspects of the history of immigration, race, and labor in the border region. However, they have given little attention to militarization and the emergence of authority in the integration of Mexicans and Mexican Americans into American society in the border region. Militarization of the U.S.-Mexican border between 1890 and 1924 contributed to the definition of racial and ethnic relations.

This study examines the history of the West Texas region while focusing on the changing relationship between the Mexican-origin community and larger society. The general intent is to demonstrate that the militarization of the region complicated relations at the same time that it established institutions that defined the new political structure in the border region. The dissertation also studies how the history of Mexican Americans was tied to the special relations between the communities along the border. This transnational relationship serves as a vantage point from which to study national and regional histories and an emphasis on race allows this study to explain the extent to which militarization affected social relations in the border region.

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Chapter 1

> This explains why the character of the movement is both desperate and redemptive…they mean that the people refuse all outside help, every imported scheme, every idea lacking some profound relationship to their intimate feelings, and that instead they turn to themselves. This desperation, this refusal to be saved by an alien project, is characteristic of the person who rejects all consolidation and shuts himself up in his private world: he is alone. At the same moment, however, his solitude becomes an effort at communion. Once again, despair and solitude, redemption and communion are equivalent terms. –Octavio Paz, El *Laberinto de la Soledad*

Introduction

I remember the twenty-mile trek from Anthony, Texas to El Paso. My brothers and I attended a small all-male Catholic high school nestled near the downtown district. One morning, as we approached the stretch of highway that hugs the University of Texas at El Paso, I noticed that the city was preparing for war. War, not in the traditional sense, but a long line of Border Patrol trucks had positioned themselves side by side along the banks of the Rio Grande to guard against what some people along the border call an "immigrant invasion." It was 1993, the El Paso Border Patrol Chief, Silvestre Reyes, had initiated *Operation Blockade*, later renamed *Operation Hold the Line*. The policy called for border agents to stand watch at the boundary line to deter immigrants from crossing illegally into the country.[1] Mixed feelings and thoughts raced through my mind but I dismissed them as we found our usual parking spot in front of the Stanton Street entrance of Cathedral High School. I never forgot that image.

This dissertation began on that day in 1993. Since then I have tried to understand as much as I can about the issue of immigration from Mexico, its causes and explanations. Now that I have the opportunity to systematically expand this

[1] John L. Martin, "Can We Control the Border? A Look at Recent Efforts in San Diego, El Paso, and Nogales," Center for Immigration Studies, Washington, D.C., May 1994.

understanding, I have chosen to address the history of the West Texas region, in particular its early formative history of racial and international conflict, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when U.S. officials sought to pacify the area and incorporate it into the national socio-economy. I propose to explain how militarization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries affected enduring relations between Mexicans and Anglos and, to a lesser degree, the relations between the United States and Mexico.[2] Border scholar, Timothy Dunn, defines militarization as the use of military rhetoric and ideology, as well as military tactics, strategy, and forces.[3] For this study, militarization will focus on the latter part of the definition and, more specifically, the introduction of local, state, and federal authoritative institutions in West Texas that were responding to local and international circumstances. The second part of the study demonstrates that militarization complicated these relations and deepened racial and international divisions. Within this analysis, I also demonstrate that the "border troubles" of the early twentieth century gave shape to an authority structure that was composed of border institutions that sought to pacify the region with ever-increasing vigilance and punitive measures. The result of such measures was a disciplined society that reinforced racial segregation in towns and cities along the border, especially in El Paso.

I contend that the history of border areas cannot be fully understood without examining their early militarization and the relationship of this formative development to social relations in local communities. More specifically, I suggest that the history of the relationship between law enforcement, military, civil and political institutions, and local

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[2] The primary geographic focus of the dissertation is El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. The broad political, social, and commercial significance of the twin border cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, require a broader geographical setting. This is why I use the term West Texas. It incorporates the various settlements surrounding El Paso, Texas. Moreover, I use the term Mexicans to identify all peoples of Mexican-origin regardless of citizenship. Citizenship will be noted when necessary to distinguish between Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans.

[3] Timothy Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border 1978-1992: Low Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1996), p. 3.

communities in the border region around El Paso contributed to the building of two separate, distinct, and racially divided communities. This occurred at two levels, within El Paso and between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. The study spans the period between 1895 and 1924. During this time, West Texas and El Paso experienced intense militarization efforts by local, state, and federal authorities who were responding to local and international circumstances.

I utilize a case study approach to highlight specific events, institutions and public figures that took part in militarizing the region and in establishing U.S. authority in El Paso. They include the U.S. Army, National Guard, the 1916 El Paso race riot, the Texas Rangers, and the Border Patrol. Scholars have addressed various aspects of the history of immigration, race, and labor in the border region; however, they have given little attention to militarization and the emergence of authority in the integration of Mexicans and Mexican Americans into American society in the border region. A case study approach allows for a close examination of both common and unique experiences by each institution in the region. Moreover, a narrowed lens into each agency reveals how the community and social relations were affected and varied between authority figures, Anglos, and Mexican residents. The complex and varied experiences among authority figures as well as its affect on social relations underlines the tentative nature of this work.

Militarization of the U.S.-Mexican border during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—between 1895 and 1924—was an important experience in local and international affairs. It helped define social relations in racial terms. Moreover, militarization reveals the extent to which local, state, and federal officials were willing to undertake to bring order to a highly chaotic situation. The violence spilling over from Mexico and unstable relations between Mexico and the United States as well as the

increased political and criminal activity on the U.S side of the border represented a source of major concern among U.S. officials.

The dissertation examines the history of the West Texas region while focusing on the changing relationship between the Mexican-origin community and larger society.[4] A principal aim in this study is to demonstrate that the militarization of the region complicated and, at times, worsened relations between Anglos and Mexicans and to a lesser extent the United States and Mexico. At the same time, it established institutions that defined the new political structure. The dissertation also acknowledges the transnational character of the history of Mexican Americans. The binational ties that Mexican communities maintained across the border serve as a vantage point from which to study national and regional histories as well as a basis for understanding Mexican identity and Anglo concerns at the turn of the century.

The study also addresses the history of Mexican Americans in West Texas as well as their relationship with other communities throughout the state and across the international border. Their continuous interaction suggests that despite long distances and an increasingly patrolled border, they shared experiences and often responded to these experiences in like manner. The study gives special attention to conflict between Mexicans and Anglos, especially the role that the Mexican Revolution played in encouraging the former to resist their social domination and in encouraging the latter to call for punitive measures against immigrants and political exiles. Finally, the dissertation will discuss race and class in defining this conflictual relationship.

This study is a history of institutions that militarized West Texas, especially El Paso. A variety of different federal, state, and local resources are utilized in this study. However, heavy emphasis is given to state and local records. At the turn of the twentieth

[4] I use the term West Texas to refer to the Big Bend region and El Paso with a passing reference to Ciudad Juárez.

century, much of the responsibility of law enforcement was entrusted on state and local officials. Therefore, the papers of the Texas Adjutant General and the variety of governors that served the state of Texas during the time period were a valuable asset. In addition, local newspapers and oral histories are used extensively to provide a clearer lens into local happenings. The oral histories, more specifically, are the experiences of active participants who bore witness to the affects of authority on social relations in West Texas and El Paso.

West Texas, Northern Chihuahua, and Authority

West Texas gives focus to the study primarily because the region and its border cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez provide a setting for the study of militarization and racialized social relations at a time of pronounced international tension and conflict. El Paso and Ciudad Juárez has served as a crossroads for the interchange of culture, politics, goods, people, and ideas since the seventeenth century, thanks to their strategic geographic location on the north-south axis and their centralized location between the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

Borderlands historians like Oscar Martínez, Wilbert H. Timmons, Charles L. Sonnichesen, and Mario García have explained that common threads have joined the regions from both sides of the border in a situation of interdependence, despite their seeming isolation and the stark economic difference between the cities. Martínez complicates the special nature of the region by stating, "Because one city is an outpost of a developing country while the other is at the outer edge of a modern industrial power, Juárez and El Paso vividly illustrate two styles of life and starkly define two disparate standards of living."[5] The interdependent characteristic of the border region is woven

[5] Oscar J. Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez Since 1848* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), p. 4; Wilbert H. Timmons, *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1990);

throughout this study; however, as militarization increased in the region divisions became increasingly more rigid and reinforced.

This study was drawn to El Paso and Ciudad Juárez because of the opportunity to understand how the transnational setting of West Texas complicated the establishment of authority. Of particular interest was how the isolated nature of the West Texas region hampered the process even more. West Texas existed in a periphery of the United States, and its history was intimately tied to the fortunes of another country. Its peripheral and transnational setting encouraged resistance to authority in two general ways. First of all, isolation and the great distance from seats of power and authority bred a frontier society that was naturally defensive towards policies and institutions that sought to integrate it into the nation state. Second, the Mexican Revolution, the first social revolution of the twentieth century, overflowed into the region and created both local problems in social relations and law enforcement, as well as international misunderstanding, conflict, and distrust. One of the consequences was an increase in local tensions. For example, crossing between the two cities and social relations within El Paso became more rigid and monitored throughout the early part of the twentieth century as violence escalated and distrust intensified between Anglo and Mexican residents.

The history of the West Texas region as both a point of convergence and divergence reveals several common and interdependent traits as well as contradictions and instances of resistance against the establishment of authoritarian institutions and the national identity that they sought to establish. To better understand this complexity one must examine the authority structure that emerged with militarization and its relationship to the area communities and institutions. More specifically, I suggest that the history of the region can be better understood by examining the development of law enforcement as

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Charles Leland Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968); Mario Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

well as military, civil, and political institutions. This history involved border protection and the border community's support and reaction towards the authority structure during the Mexican Revolution and the Progressive and Prohibition Eras, when the region experienced incredible growth and conflict. Moreover, the conflictual social relations that resulted underscore the importance of race in defining Anglo and Mexican relations as well as relations between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez.

During the early 1900s, tensions between Anglos and Mexicans worsened as the policies of prohibition and immigration were enforced in the area. State and federal institutions increased their presence and played a significant role in enforcing laws that locals often disobeyed. A complex struggle developed as U.S. demand for illegal goods and labor escalated and Mexico continued to supply it, thus undermining the integrity and effectiveness of law enforcement agencies such as the United States Border Patrol.

Much of the violence that visited the border region involved the smuggling of contraband alcohol as border entrepreneurs sought to avoid the law by producing it in Mexico, beyond the view of U.S. officials. Crossing the contraband alcohol already involved major investments and the willingness to import it by any means necessary. This resulted in violent confrontations on the international line that often involved Mexican officials.

Mexicans, of course, transported the liquor across the border. Consequentially, they were associated with the contraband trade as well as with the related conflict that often occurred in the region. This is one of the reasons why Mexicans came to represent the subject "other," the border resident who seemed to disregard the law and was prone to violent measures in pursuing the trade. In this way, the enforcement of prohibition laws in West Texas contributed to the racialization of social relations and the creation of a dual society composed of Mexicans and Anglos.

Tension and conflict were not the only parts to the story of the development of authoritarian institutions along the border. Rapid social and economic development was also evident. Conflict and development, in fact, emerged together during the turn of the century as El Paso entered its first phase of modernization. The city had a reputation as a haven for undesirables that included tough cowboys, Mexicans evading arrest in Mexico, and criminals. This led to calls for the establishment of authoritarian institutions to ensure the smooth transition into modernity. The establishment of a civil Americanized society was expected in a region that was still being incorporated into the U.S. socio-economy during the late nineteenth century. The tension and conflict that resulted from the Mexican Revolution and racialized relations on the U.S. side complicated life even more and reinforced the call for stability and order.[6]

During the Mexican Revolution, numerous revolutionary factions used West Texas as a staging point to organize, recruit soldiers, and acquire supplies. Ciudad Juárez, in particular, was a major battleground and a critical link for revolutionaries to ship supplies and men to strategic locales. However, revolutionary activity and violence spilled over into the United States and some residents along the international boundary experienced incursions on their property by various revolutionary or independent groups. Many of the residents and authority figures in the region attributed the depredations to Mexicans residing in the United States and the influx of immigrants fleeing the turmoil in Mexico.

The tumultuous state of affairs during the Revolution gave rise to massive emigration to the United States beginning in 1910 and continuing through the 1920s. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants flooded the U.S.-Mexican border region. The instability in Mexico coincided with economic growth in the American Southwest,

[6] Oscar J. Martínez, *Troublesome Border* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), p. 2.

accompanied by a tremendous demand for labor.[7] Increased immigration from Mexico also inspired immigration restrictionists to seek tighter controls of the border. As growers grew increasingly dependent on foreign labor, a system of regulated practices that yielded to ambiguous enforcement between the state and employers affected Mexican incorporation into the American socio-economy. The authority structure played a critical role in facilitating labor, managing border crises, and defining place for the Mexican in the American cultural enclave.

In defining the emergent authority structure in Far West Texas and northern Mexico, I draw on various works, including Marshall W. Meyer's study of bureaucratic authority. Meyer defines this concept as:

> …the authorization or legitimation of a particular person to issue commands or obligations that are binding upon other persons (and himself) in a particular situation…authority is an attribute that is attached to specific positions and roles.[8]

His assessment of organization also addresses the circumstance of institutional expansion and the continual need to centralize control for optimal efficiency.[9] Meyer's definition of centralized organization can be seen in the establishment of formal state and federal authority, policy, and institutions along the U.S.-Mexican border. However, under the kind of frontier conditions evident in West Texas during the late nineteenth century, Anglo and Mexican residents occasionally challenged effective centralized control. In light of Meyer's assessment of organization that depends on centralized control, the bureaucratic challenges posed by the frontier, such as distance from the center, international tensions, conflict, and communication lines often decentralized control.

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[7] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, p. 41.
[8] Marshall W. Meyer, "Two Authority Structures of Bureaucratic Organization," *Administrative Science Quarterly,* Vol. 13, No. 2 (September, 1968), p. 213.
[9] Ibid, p. 214.

Borderlands scholar, Oscar Martínez, expounds on Meyer's take on the inability of traditional institutions to extend their reach effectively into outlying areas by outlining the unique context the frontier poses.[10]

Martínez contends that the border is viewed from centralized governments and institutions as a trouble spot that portrays a breakdown of institutions, social systems and legal structures.[11] However, it is within this context that the border functions normally, according to Martínez. By nature, its distance from the core spawns independence, rebellion, cultural deviation, and lawlessness. The borderlands, as a peripheral area away from the centers of power, prevented traditional institutions from taking hold quickly and effectively. Isolation from economic and political centers played a key role in the fundamental breakdown of the state's influence on the border region. Martínez further explains that this challenge contributed to ad hoc measures by authority figures in local border areas:

> Isolation, weak institutions, lax administration, and a different economic orientation prompt people on the periphery to develop homemade approaches to their problems and unconventional means of carrying on mutually beneficial relationships across an international boundary.[12]

The frontier conditions present in West Texas and the distance from centers of power in Austin, Texas, and Mexico City prompted local residents and officials to make independent decisions separate from the state. These unique circumstances gave way to an independent spirit that was sometimes exercised through acts of resistance and conflict.

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[10] Martínez, *Troublesome Border*, p. 2.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

C. Edward Weber brings greater clarity to the development of authority with his claim that power arises out of certain circumstances relating to person, position, and situation.[13] The peripheral status of the U.S.-Mexican border is reflective of Weber's concept of authority. As events unfolded in West Texas, power was granted and assumed to address the circumstances that arose along the region. For example, "self-appointed" authority figures such as vigilante groups and deputized Ranchmen emerged as Texas Rangers. This falls squarely into the category of situational authority that Weber discusses. The conflict raging in Mexico, the violence associated with Prohibition, and generalized conflict in West Texas provided the context for various authority figures to assume power along with the traditional institutions in El Paso. Meyer and Weber provide us with a theoretical snapshot of authority that helps us understand the history of border policing and the disciplining of frontier society in the West Texas region. Ana María Alonso offers specificity to the development of authority and power in the specific space of the Mexico-United States border region, especially as it relates to Mexican-Anglo relations.[14]

Alonso argues that the subaltern discourse of protest implicitly recognizes that power circulates throughout the social body and is not simply concentrated in government structures. Thus, a culture of warfare is bred and maintained within the parameters of the frontier. Alonso also discusses the cycle of violence and how a frontier ethos, military training, and the need for social mobility were perpetuated. Authority

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[13] C. Edward Weber, "The Nature of Authority: Comment," *The Journal of the Academy of Management*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (April 1961), pp. 62-63.
[14] Ana María Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on the Mexican Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995).

structures were maintained by force and were critical to the maintenance of power. Furthermore, space and isolation contributed to the power shifts along the border.[15]

A closer look at Sebastian de Grazia's assessment on the subject of authority is necessary in order to further Alonso's argument concerning power. He situates power and the acceptance of authority within the populous. According to de Grazia the *polis* holds certain purposes in common:

> …they grant authority to whomever they esteem for being able to guide them to these ends. The holder of authority thus is bound by common goals and by his desire and capacity to move toward them.[16]

If those common goals are compromised then authority over those people is incomplete. In other words, the leader and the community must have a common understanding regardless of whether the leader is democratically or undemocratically elected.

The social setting in the West Texas region was consistent with the Alonso and De Grazia theses. That is, the Texas Rangers, local law enforcement officials, the U.S. Army, the Mexican Army, and vigilantes assumed authority positions but had to seek the approval of the community. Since they were unable to garner sufficient and consistent support, the resultant violence disrupted authority. This led to efforts at reorganizing authority and centralizing its power which often aggravated tension and conflict. Martínez is especially useful in understanding the consequences of this. He uses blunt language to describe them, "if national laws appear unjust or are viewed as impractical in

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Sebastian De Grazia, "What Authority is Not," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (June 1959), p. 322.

a border context, it becomes culturally acceptable to work around them or ignore them altogether."[17] De Grazia adds an important and relevant point:

> In all cases, without respect for a dedication and a capacity related to the common good, authority does not exist. Those who dominate without esteem may have power, may often have obedience, but authority they have not. They are not rulers; they are tyrants, those who cannot lay down a rule.[18]

The breakdown of a common objective between Mexicans and persons in positions of authority in West Texas, especially in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez suggests that various law enforcement agencies exercised tyrannical rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that this undermined their legitimacy and provoked challenges to their authority.

The conceptual arguments regarding authority and its effect on social relations can be seen in West Texas at the turn of the twentieth century. In addition, the circumstances provided by the industrialization of West Texas, the Mexican Revolution, and Prohibition demonstrate how authority and social relations responded and changed over time. The coupling of intense events and West Texas' location along the international boundary challenged the effective development of authority and complicated social relations between Anglos and Mexicans.

The violence of the Mexican Revolution exported the problems of criminality, radical political activity, displaced workers and frayed social relations. This hampered the ability of U.S. officials to effectively maintain order and affirm their authority. The conflict that ensued in West Texas, thus assumed a bi-national and racialized nature. This

[17] Martínez, *Troublesome Border*, p. 2.
[18] De Grazia, "What Authority is Not," p. 322.

is critical for an understanding of the establishment of authority in an unruly frontier society like El Paso and Ciudad Juárez in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

Vigilant measures over Mexican crossings on the border and within Texas became more pronounced at the turn of the century. A number of factors contributed to the resultant conflict. For example, northern Mexico's economic downturn in the early 1900s forced mass migration northward and consequentially saturated labor pools and exhausted civil services. Texas' progressive reform in the late nineteenth century antagonized Mexico as it absorbed much of its vice industry. Moreover, the criminality that ensued with increased ranch incursions, or ranch raids, into Texas made Mexicans a threat to Anglo settlement and authority in Texas' western frontier.

The seeds of distrust and animosity between Anglos and Mexicans can be traced to the Texas Revolution in 1836 and the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. During the 1840s and 1850s, authorities such as the Texas Rangers and U.S. Army concentrated their efforts along the border region on behalf of the new Anglo settlers, harassing Mexican residents and ridding them from the territory. Mexican obstruction involved resistance to the violent transfer of land to Anglo hands.[19] The conflicts persisted through the turn of the century as Mexicans emerged as an obstacle to Anglo expansion after the Indian Wars of the 1880s.

The dramatic increase of Mexican immigration, a response to the industrialization of the Southwest, also caused problems for places like West Texas. The immediate effect

[19] Julian Samora, *Gunpowder Justice: A Reassessment of the Texas Rangers* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), p. 2.

was significant Mexican population growth on both sides of the border. This posed several problems. For instance, the increase in the labor supply complicated social relations as Anglos in urban areas began to complain that the workers recruited for agricultural work were entering the cities and posing problems like labor displacement and depressed wages. Although there is no evidence that immigration depressed wages or displaced U.S. workers, organized labor made the claim. This, in turn, provoked added anti-Mexican feelings that were evident in El Paso.[20] However, labor and a changing economy at the turn of the century were not the only contributing factors to antagonizing feelings toward Mexicans.

As the twentieth century began, Ciudad Juárez's economic base changed from a prospering commercial and agricultural hub to a city focused on tourism.[21] At the same time, Texas' progressive agenda swept across the state and forced much of El Paso's vice industry to shut down or move south of the border. Ciudad Juárez consequently came to be characterized as the progressive's immoral "other," the crude and uncivilized contrast to Texas' and El Paso's modern self. The smuggling of contraband during El Paso's progressive reforms reinforced this view of Ciudad Juárez. It also ushered in a violent era. Increased violence between law enforcement officers and smugglers associated criminality and transgressions with the Mexican community as a whole.

Armed conflict between Anglo authorities and Mexican residents also contributed to the view of the Mexican as a threat. This began during the later decades of the

[20] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, pp. 35-36.
[21] Ibid, p. 30.

nineteenth century, when gangs of thieves and rustlers flourished in the region.[22] Many Anglo and Mexican criminals saw the region as a safe haven because of its relative isolation and access to the international boundary. Regardless of the presence of Anglos, criminality became associated with the Mexican community. Their cattle raids and killings, directed from Mexico and often inspired by revolutionary thought, increased significantly during the early twentieth century and reinforced the view of Mexicans as criminals. Moreover, the Mexican Revolution led to violent encounters between law enforcement officials and Mexican residents from both sides of the border. For example, the "Plan de San Diego," an irredentist movement of 1915-1916 that engulfed Deep South Texas in a race war drew much inspiration from the Revolution and its partisans received material support from Mexican revolutionaries along the border.[23] By the late 1910s, Mexican residents on both sides of the border were classified as subject "others" and designated as a threat to Anglo security and national sovereignty.

The establishment of authority on the border consequently faced the challenge of transborder conflict. First, the violence of the Mexican Revolution often spilled over onto American soil. Also, Mexican revolutionaries, such as Francisco Madero and Francisco "Pancho" Villa, used American cities as safe havens to plan and organize

[22] Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*, p. 311.

[23] For more on the Plan of San Diego and racial conflict between Anglos and Mexicans in Texas see: Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004); James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); Benjamin Heber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1935).

insurrections. In addition, revolutionaries such as Villa threatened and seized American land holdings and businesses in Mexico.[24]

The enforcement of prohibition laws also contributed to transborder conflict. The Texas Rangers, U.S. Customs officials, and the Border Patrolmen all acknowledged that violence in El Paso during 1918-1933 was the most intense and added to the difficulty in enforcing policies. U.S. officials struggled to curb the alcohol smuggling into the United States because of lack of resources, including manpower, technology, and the lack of cooperation by Mexican officials. In fact, Mexican officials often aided smugglers by serving as scouts and armed guards on the border. Mexican residents living along the river also helped smugglers avoid U.S. law enforcement agents. Suspected smugglers and U.S. law enforcement consistently engaged in gun battles throughout the 1920s. All in all, the El Paso border region provided easy access for smugglers and made it possible for them to avoid prosecution. This constituted a major challenge to state and federal authorities.

The study focuses on El Paso and Ciudad Juárez because the popular crossing became a key point of confluence in the history of immigration, smuggling, and law enforcement at the turn of the twentieth century. This was especially evident in the field of immigration. When El Paso and Ciudad Juarez developed the accoutrements of a modern city in the 1880s, the region experienced massive population growth as Anglo settlers sought out land and cheap Mexican labor to satisfy the expansion and

[24] Most of American capital was invested in mines or related industries, such as smelters. Most of the mines and smelters were in territory controlled by Villa. However, in March 1915, Villa issued a decree that provided for the confiscation of all mining properties that had been abandoned. The decree affected many American business owners since the American government advised all its citizens to leave Mexico

development of the railroad and other industries in the area. Mexican laborers filtered through the border seeking job opportunities. The immigrant flow was facilitated by the building of railroads in the 1880s that connected the border cities with each other and their respective interiors.

El Paso's development attracted workers and the industrialization of the Southwest. The proximity of the border encouraged the influx of foreign capital and facilitated the penetration of Mexican and U.S. products into both markets.[25] Construction companies, for example, depended heavily on Mexican workers, especially for common labor as modernization hit the area.[26] The industrial boom in El Paso required a large number of manual laborers and employers sought Mexicans. El Paso's large Mexican population and proximity to Ciudad Juárez was believed to be an incredible asset to develop numerous industries.[27] However, the ready supply of Mexican laborers had adverse affects that kept them from full incorporation into the American socio-economic enclave.

According to scholar, Mario T. Garcia, El Paso's commercial and semi-industrial economy determined the jobs Mexicans acquired in the border city. The city's dependence on manual labor was subsidized by the large labor pool of Mexicans on both sides of the border. Also, for many employers, Mexicans were thought to be ideal for manual labor since they were thought to have no ambition and were willing to work for a

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and cut railroad lines shutdown business in the mines. Clarence C. Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study in Unconventional Diplomacy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 160.
[25] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, p. 19.
[26] García, *Desert Immigrants*, p. 68.
[27] Ibid, p. 65.

low wage.[28] These recruitment practices discussed by Garcia channeled workers to the lower skilled and lower paying jobs in the developing industries of mining, railroads, and agriculture. Competition for Mexican workers outside the American Southwest also increased and placed pressure on the state and federal government to regulate the Mexican labor flow according to the needs of regional employers.

By the late 1920s, Texas farmers began to move towards a more effective regulation of labor flows primarily in response to the recruitment activities of labor agents representing Midwestern industrial interests. Their practices drew increasing numbers of Mexican workers away from Southwestern agriculture. For example, the number of Mexicans employed by sixteen railroads in the Chicago-Gary region grew steadily throughout the 1920s. By 1928, Mexicans comprised forty-two percent of the railroads' workforce.[29] According to David Montejano, Texas farmers saw their labor supply jeopardized as the activities of these "outside" employers threatened to siphon off the labor source.[30] Texas employers responded by seeking a more regulated practice of placing Mexican workers to satisfy the employers' needs and adopting effective methods to control the movement of workers in places like South Texas.

Farmers collaborated with the Texas state government to establish the Texas Farm Placement Service which used agricultural agents to direct the movement of workers.[31] Collaboration with the state to regulate labor flow did more than satisfy farmers' needs.

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[28] Ibid, p. 68.
[29] David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1987), pp. 208-209.
[30] Ibid, pp. 209-210.
[31] Ibid, p. 212.

It also involved the assignment of Mexicans to lower-skilled and lower-paying jobs in agriculture. In this way, farmers contributed to the overall segregation of Mexicans.

Since Mexican immigration is central to this study, it is necessary to discuss and incorporate the focus on immigrants as laborers and their impact on social development. Scholars such as Juan Gómez-Quiñones and David Montejano have underscored that the history of immigration is also the history of workers and that it includes labor issues such as work experiences, methods of control, transnational organizing, and independent organizations.[32] Gómez Quiñones' ground-breaking historiographical essay is especially important. He provided the earliest argument calling for the study of immigration history that went beyond a focus on legislation, its enforcement, and the role that authority played. He also called for the incorporation of race and relations between governments and communities.[33] This study answers the call and builds on Gómez-Quiñones' argument by analyzing the experiences of each institution involved in the militarization of the region and their unique affect on social relations.

David Montejano furthered our understanding of race relations and their impact on social development. In his study, the Mexican emerged as a resistant and "problematic" feature of the overall social structure and as an ambiguous racial type that disrupted the strict racial dichotomy of black and white in the United States. Moreover, Mexicans as both immigrant and subjugated citizen became part of a socio-economy that created separate and subordinate institutions that defined their place within the American

[32] Juan Gómez Quiñones, "Toward a Perspective on Chicano History," *Aztlán*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Fall 1971), pp. 1-51 and Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*.
[33] Gómez Quiñones, "Toward a Perspective on Chicano History."

cultural enclave.[34] In this dissertation, the emergence of the Mexican subject "other" and reinforced divisions between Anglos and Mexicans compliments Montejano's assessment of the separate and subordinate place of the Mexican.

The history of Mexicans is intimately tied to the special relations between border communities. By recognizing the relative codependent relationship between border communities, we acknowledge their vantage point from which to study national and regional histories in transnational settings. In addition, policies regarding border militarization, labor, immigration, and prohibition affected communities and caused them to search for ways to survive and resist changing circumstances. The peripheral setting of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez and the ethnic status of Mexicans, at times left them vulnerable to the policy decisions of Washington, D.C. and Mexico City. Moreover, much of the conflict and social agitation present in the West Texas region originated in changes in the socio-economy, which then took on a racial form as it complicated social divisions between Mexicans and Anglos in El Paso and the surrounding area.[35] The transnational nature of my study will demonstrate and second the observation by Mario Garcia and Oscar Martínez. That is, border communities have a history of intimate

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[34] Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, p. 196.

[35] Social anthropologist Pablo Vila has conducted one of the most recent studies on the El Paso and Ciudad Juárez region. Vila compiled several hundred interviews during his roughly seven years in the region. Vila emphasizes that narratives about oneself and "others" are crucial to processes of identity construction. In addition, the narratives he collected in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez support the concept that the region's peripheral existence in relation to their respective capital cities and/or other major cities binds them intimately in all facets of society, a fact that I believe is also evident at the turn of the twentieth century, Pablo Vila. *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders* (Austin: The University of Texas at Austin, 2000). For more on racial identity along the U.S.-Mexican border, please see: Guadalupe Valdes, ed. *Social and educational issues in bilingualism and biculturalism* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981); Rosa Linda Fregoso, *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2003); Jaime E. Rodriguez, *Common border, uncommon paths : race, culture, and national identity in U.S.-Mexican relations* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources,

relations. In addition, this study will augment García and Martínez's assessment of the region by focusing on militarization and its affect on social relations.

The case studies that follow appear in chapter form. The first case study, introduces the topic of militarization with an examination of the history of Texas and its western frontier. Special attention is given to the Texas Rangers, who acted as the primary law enforcement body that addressed social unrest and made significant contributions to socio-economic change in the region. Through this case study I demonstrate that Ranger authority changed over time and consequently affected social relations between Anglos and Mexicans.

The second case study addresses the role of the U.S. Army and vigilantes in racialized conflict in 1916. I argue that military force contributed to the racial divisions that characterized social relations in West Texas, especially in El Paso. The chapter focuses on the race riot of January 1916 in El Paso that resulted in the segregation of the Mexican community from Anglos.

In the third case study, I examine the history of the National Guard and the Home Guard after the Columbus, New Mexico raid by Francisco "Pancho" Villa. The main contention here is that racial and political demarcations within El Paso and between the United States and Mexico were bolstered by the National Guard and civilian volunteers. Also, progressive reform aimed at military personnel impacted downtown merchants and agitated social relations.

1993); Pablo Vila, "Everyday life, culture and identity on the Mexican-American border : the Ciudad Juarez-El Paso case," Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1994.

The fourth case study analyzes the establishment of a permanent federal institution entrusted with enforcing immigration law and brokering labor and immigrant flows. The enforcement of prohibition laws and the consequential violence that ensued created a conflictive relationship between law enforcement officials and Mexican residents. Moreover, a heightened racial context is discussed as nativist rhetoric and backlash influenced enforcement policy.

My final chapter summarizes the dissertation and concludes with a discussion of key findings. An emphasis is placed on the historical significance of the period and the region as a binational space. The study seeks to demonstrate that militarization and the development of authority racialized social relations and the efforts undertaken by federal, state, and local authorities to bring order and maintain divisions.

This study addresses a binational experience that sheds light on other border regions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Modernization engulfed the socio-economy and produced variations of the same general experience along the U.S.-Mexico border. Border towns witnessed the significant growth and expansion of regional economies and, as a consequence, grew significantly in population. The dramatic economic and demographic growth, as well as the violence that resulted from the Mexican Revolution, overtook the capacity of local authorities to insure a peaceful transition to a modern state. In numerous cases, ad hoc law enforcement actions as well as the overzealous enforcement of immigration and prohibition laws aggravated matters in local areas and created international conflicts. Militarization, consequently, became an acceptable option as law enforcement agencies also sought greater cooperation and efficiency in disciplining frontier society. In the process, social relations that were

already racialized as a result of previous local and international conflicts were further complicated and created separate communities of Mexicans and Anglos.

A special framework is established in this study that demonstrates that each institution involved in the militarization process shared similar and unique experiences in West Texas. Each one is affected by larger occurrences and consequently impacts social relations in a particular manner. Local, state, and federal institutions differ in how they adjust to local circumstance and execute their individual agendas. Therefore, the discussion of militarization and development of authority on the border is complicated by focusing on each institution and its unique experience in West Texas from 1895-1924.

Chapter 2

Mexican Rattlesnake;
The Texas Rangers in West Texas

Introduction

As the state's primary police force in the nineteenth century, the Texas Rangers had the ostensible responsibility of maintaining law and order, a duty that meant pacifying Native Americans and securing the Texas border region from the recurring conflict with Mexicans. According to Julian Samora, the Rangers were responsible for "securing the rapidly expanding frontier of the [Texas] Republic, and later the border of the state of Texas," since at least 1823, when they began patrolling the Texas western frontier."[36] However, as time and circumstance changed so did their work. The end of the "Indian Wars" in the 1880s, the expanding frontier, and its isolated character attracted notorious criminals as well as revolutionary minded Mexicans. As a consequence, the Rangers became the state's leading law enforcement body on the border at the turn of the twentieth century.[37]

The story of the Rangers in the late 1800s and early 1900s is intimately tied to the development of the border socio-economy. They generally used harsh methods to pacify the region and usher in a new era of economic development. Pacification and economic development involved racialized conflict, the collapse of a complex Mexican social structure, the isolation of Mexicans in the bottom segment of the working class, and the

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36 Julian Samora, Joe Bernal, and Albert Peña, *Gunpowder Justice: A Reassessment of the Texas Rangers* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 1-2.

37 Jack Shipman.,"Texas Rangers," Undated, Texas Rangers Verticle File, Border Heritage Collection El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

Americanization of life along the U.S. border. Historians differ on the degree to which Ranger violence contributed to this momentous change, but they agree that the state police force played an important role. This consensus, however, for the most part does not take into account important differences in the Ranger story nor do they use these differences to underscore varying consequences to their law enforcement work.

The West Texas region that encompasses El Paso/Ciudad Juárez offers an opportunity to re-evaluate the role that the Rangers played in pacifying the border and in establishing racialized American authority. The region stands apart with its largely Mexican demographic, as well as, isolated and mountainous landscape. The vast space and the long border with Mexico as well as the important point of international interchange at El Paso and Ciudad Juárez presented special and often insurmountable challenges to effectively pacify and develop the region. Moreover, the large Mexican population and international tensions that appeared prominently along the border and in the twin cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez caused the Rangers to seek out collaborative ties with local Mexican residents. Their relations with the local Mexicans showed much cooperation though racialized conflict was also evident elsewhere.

This study seeks to demonstrate that the Texas Rangers reinforced divisions between Anglos and Mexicans as it became the state's principle law enforcement body on the border at the turn of the twentieth century. Between the 1880s and the 1910s, the Rangers collaborated with the Mexican population and officials to suppress the "lawlessness" and criminal element represented by both "bad Mexicans" and a "hard

formation of [Anglo] Americans."[38] However, as modernization brought more Anglo settlers and the Mexican Revolution took shape, the Rangers' relationship with the Mexican community grew more divisive. The state's determined efforts to establish authority, the resulting violence, and the advent of the Mexican Revolution played a significant role in dividing the two communities further.

The "border troubles" of the late nineteenth century led to one of the earliest deployments of Rangers in the region. On such instance occurred in 1895 when Texas Governor Charles Culberson sent members of the state police force to the region to enforce the state's prohibition of prizefighting and gambling.[39] Other factors contributed to the deployments. The vice industry at El Paso and Ciudad Juárez represented a major source of concern for the governor and the Adjutant General, the civilian officer responsible for the Rangers. Smuggling, depredations by Mexicans crossing into Texas, and the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution also contributed to tension and the official and public perception of lawlessness. The Rangers also came to West Texas to supplement the outnumbered and outmatched local law enforcement officials. Despite the different relations that Rangers were able to negotiate with Mexicans in the region, conflicts associated with the Mexican Revolution of 1910, including the excessive use of force on political exiles, racialized relations and contributed to the expansion of the Ranger force. This coincided with the greater militarization of the region as well as with

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38 Dane Coolidge, *Fighting Men of the West* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1932).

39 "Charles A. Culberson," *Handbook of Texas Online*, http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/CC/fcu2.html (accessed June 1, 2007).

the larger process of racialization that shaped relations between Mexicans and Anglos in Texas.

"Texas frontier law was raw, rough, and red with blood…"[40]

Since 1823, the Texas Rangers served primarily as a small volunteer force to protect Anglo settlements from Indian intrusions. However, as the Anglo settlements moved westward, the Rangers served as guardians of this expansion. Borderlands scholar Julian Samora contends that the Rangers were responsible for "pacification" of Native Americans as well as the removal of Mexicans from their lands.[41] This served as a catalyst for Anglo ranchers and farmers to settle the area and profit from Ranger protection. Cattle barons often funded the Rangers to guarantee their protection and influence. Paired with the responsibility of protecting white property and the "clean up" of undesirables militarized the force even more. The Rangers were organized under formal leadership appointed by the governor and given specific responsibilities that addressed its western frontier and protection of its southern border.

After Reconstruction, the plans to establish a permanent state force assumed greater importance when Texas became less dependent on the federal government and detested the presence of federal troops in the state.[42] This involved James Davidson, the first Adjutant General appointed by the Legislature in 1870. One of early reforms of the Rangers occurred in 1874 when Governor Richard Coke created two separate forces,

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[40] "Early Day Rangers," *El Paso Times*, October 27, 1963.
[41] Samora, *Gunpowder Justice*, pp. 11-12.

[42] Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1935), p. 307.

each with unique responsibilities. The larger of the two forces was the Frontier Battalion. It was commissioned to protect the western settlements from Indian raids and, if necessary, punish them. The groups consisted of six companies of seventy-five men each. Major John B. Jones was entrusted with commanding the Battalion.[43] Major Jones described his terrain as the frontier that stretched from the Red River to the Nueces. He relied heavily on his fellow captains to mobilize the various companies and supply them adequately.[44] The Frontier Battalion engaged in approximately fifteen Indian battles in 1874 and by the following year, with the help of the United States Cavalry, forcibly displaced the Comanches and Kiowas from the Texas frontier. In addition to Indian removal, the unit apprehended thousands of Texas outlaws, such as Sam Bass and John Wesley Hardin.[45]

The Frontier Battalion operated until 1881. By that time, the Indian strongholds in West Texas had been destroyed. Cattle and land barons had taken hold in places like Palo Duro and El Paso. Moreover, by 1882 the Southern Pacific and the Texas Pacific made their way to El Paso paving the way for Anglo settlement to the West Coast.[46]

Governor Coke's reorganization of the Texas Rangers included a smaller Ranger contingent known as the Special Ranger Force. This group of Rangers was led by a former Confederate scout and guerilla leader named L.H. McNelly. The primary responsibility of the Ranger force was to end thieving and plundering along the Rio Grande River from Brownsville to El Paso. For many ranchers and farmers along the

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[43] "Texas Rangers," *Handbook of Texas Online*,
[44] Webb, *The Texas Rangers*, p. 312.
[45] "Texas Rangers," *Handbook of Texas Online*.
[46] Webb, *The Texas Rangers*, p. 425.

Texas-Mexican border, the claims of Mexican banditry had become so acute that in 1875 Captain McNelly was asked to "clean-up" the border of Mexican cow thieves and restore order.[47] For much of the next twenty years, the Rangers acted as a lawless group of "roughnecks" harassing and tormenting residents who crossed their path, especially Indians and Mexicans.[48]

The Frontier Battalion and Special Ranger Force came to their demise by 1900. Various factors played a role in their dissolution. For example, many Anglo cattle barons, especially in West Texas, resented a centralized police force.[49] For many, a centralized police force represented the arbitrary powers exercised by the state during the Reconstruction Era.[50] Also, their violent behavior throughout the state led to a popular outcry for their dismissal. Jealousy among local law enforcement officers and corrupt recruits also played a role in the reduction of the force.[51] The Texas Rangers were reorganized on June 1, 1900, into a skeleton crew of four companies of six men each, three officers and three privates. The force continued to be responsible for protecting the

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[47] Ibid, pp. 238-239.

[48] Carlysle Graham Raht, *Romance of Davis Mountains* (Odessa: Rahtbooks Co., 1963), pp. 225-229, 257-360, 308-312, 377; Ronnie Tyler, *The Big Bend* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Publications, 1975), pp. 157-158; Webb, *The Texas Rangers*, pp. 425-427, 437-438, 446-447.

[49] Webb, *The Texas Rangers*, p. 452.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Corrupt officers were, at times, allowed to practice law enforcement despite known criminal behavior. The enlistment of corrupt officers contributed to dissatisfaction towards the Rangers by residents. For example, in his memoirs, Ranger James B. Gillett describes an incident with a Ranger that was on the "fugitive list" issued by the Adjutant General. He was charged with assault with intent to kill. Gillett revealed this discovery to Captain George W. Baylor who quickly condoned the Ranger's actions by stating that "maybe the darned fellow needed killing." James B. Gillett, *Six Years with the Texas Rangers, 1875-1881* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 191.

frontier against marauding and thieving parties, and for the suppression of lawlessness and crime throughout the state.[52]

The Rangers underwent another major reorganization in 1918. The Thirty-fifth Texas Legislature appropriated $400,000 for the Border Service Fund and expanded the size of the Texas Rangers. The expanded ranger force included an investigatory branch responsible for gathering intelligence on Mexican revolutionary activities, cattle stealing, and anti-American campaigns in Texas. A volunteer division emerged from within the Special Ranger division known as the Loyalty Rangers. They patrolled the Rio Grande and monitored border crossings and "draft dodgers" who were eluding Woodrow Wilson's military conscription proclamation.[53] The expansion of the Rangers was an attempt by the state, in particular Governor William Hobby, to address the national security concerns that came with the U.S.'s involvement in World War I and the state's commitment to prosecute "disloyal" acts.[54] In addition to enforcing federal laws, the Ranger force was responsible for addressing thievery, ranch raids, and other illegal activities associated with the border troubles. [55]

At the end of World War I, the Ranger force faced another major reduction and a fresh round of harsh criticism primarily due to its harsh tactics. In September 1918, the appropriation for the Ranger Force was cut to $50,000. Although officials were concerned over the Rangers' violent tactics, they took this action primarily because of a

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[52] Adjutant General Thomas Scurry, General Order No 62, July 3, 1901, Adjutant General Papers. Texas State Library and Archives; Webb, *Texas Rangers*, p. 457.
[53] Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2004), pp. 396-397.
[54] Ibid, p. 396.
[55] Glenn Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1992), pp. 35-36.

depleted state treasury. The volunteer divisions were abolished by February 1919 and the Regular Rangers were reduced from twelve companies to four beginning on December 31, 1918.[56] Charges of unwarranted violence against Mexicans along the border also contributed to their reduction.

Texas state representative, José T. Canales, of South Texas filed nineteen charges against the Ranger force largely for their violence against Mexicans in South Texas.[57] This resulted from an investigation of the force by the Texas Legislature and state representative William H. Bledsoe who chaired the committee that conducted the inquiry. The investigation discovered major violations and human rights infractions in South Texas, but also in other places throughout the state.

The charges by the investigative committee ranged from murder, wanton killing, flogging and torturing prisoners, drunkenness, and assault.[58] Most of the charges came from the Rio Grande Valley region of South Texas; however, major incidences of mass murder and other atrocities occurred in West Texas as well. For example, among the list of charges presented by Canales accused the Rangers of committing racial violence against Mexicans between 1915 and 1918, including the killing of fifteen Mexicans in a small West Texas village called El Porvenir. The committee concluded that the dead men were innocent of any wrong doing and determined that they were shot because the villagers had conspired with some of the ranch raiders. The El Porvenir case, as will be

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[56] Harris III and Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, pp. 427-428.
[57] "José Tomás Canales," *Handbook of Texas Online*, http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/CC/fcaag.html (accessed June 4, 2007).
[58] Webb, *Texas Rangers*, p. 514.

later demonstrated, underscores the tenuous relationship that emerged between Mexican residents along the border and state authority figures like the Rangers.

An awkward political compromise was arranged after nearly two months of investigation and a wide range of accusations made by Canales.[59] The understanding was that the Rangers' excesses were unacceptable but that its function as a state police force was necessary to protect cattle men from thieves and other "bad characters."[60] The committee recognized the abuses of the Rangers but also highlighted the exemplary services of the Rangers. The committee chairman, William H. Bledsoe of Lubbock, proposed a substitute bill for Ranger reform that the legislature subsequently accepted. Initially, Canales had introduced a bill to reorganize and upgrade the Rangers by raising their pay and qualifications.[61] However, he faced considerable opposition from ranger captain Frank Hamer and committee chairman William H. Bledsoe for his harsh criticism of the force. Bledsoe, in turn, introduced a substitute bill that the legislature subsequently accepted.

The Bledsoe bill provided for Special Rangers to be recommended by district judges and attorneys. This was intended to deny ranchers the opportunity to solicit the help of the Adjutant General in deputizing their own private police forces and to use these private Rangers to kill Mexican ranchers and deprive their families of their properties.[62] The bill also called on the Rangers to surrender their prisoners to the local sheriff's department where the arrest could be made. The intention was to put a stop to the

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[59] Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 270.
[60] Webb, *Texas Rangers*, p. 514.
[61] Samora, *Gunpowder Justice*, p. 66.
[62] Harris III and Sadler, *Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, p. 459.

mysterious killing of Mexican prisoners in legal custody, a practice that had also seriously impaired racial relations in Texas.[63] In addition, charges of abuse were to be heard by a local magistrate if the Adjutant General decided it was necessary to initiate an investigation. Moreover, nominal salary increases were also proposed but reduced before the bill left the House. The Bledsoe bill passed both the House and Senate with little opposition. Despite the reduction in the authority of the Rangers, the force remained relatively intact. For instance, the governor and adjutant general were left to utilize the Rangers as they saw fit.[64] The Ranger investigation, nevertheless, highlighted the violence that the Rangers directed against Mexicans and their contribution to the racialization of relations between Mexicans and whites in South and West Texas. Their general influence, however, varied between regions.

The Ranger account of West Texas that emerged at the turn of the century differed in part because residents resisted outside influence and authority. Much of this defiance was attributed to the great distance between West Texas and Austin, the seat of state authority. It was difficult for supervisors such as the Adjutant General, who commanded the Texas Rangers, to manage the work of the Rangers. In addition, the isolation of West Texas encouraged local officials and citizens to seek their own kind of justice or retribution. Moreover, the international boundary was a unique obstacle for the Rangers in that it made evasion from the law possible. The variety of problems that were presented to the Rangers in West Texas included rebelliousness, defiance, and general disorder. This was evident in 1896, when locals tested the authority of the governor and

[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid, p. 461.

Rangers by moving a prizefight to Ciudad Juárez and beyond the jurisdiction of the state police.

The incident began when a boxing promoter named Dan Stewart offered heavyweights Bob Fitzsimmons and Peter Maher $10,000 to fight in Ciudad Juárez. When news outlets reported that the fight would take part in El Paso, Governor Charles Culberson sent a company of Rangers to El Paso to enforce the state's anti-gambling legislation. City leaders, of course, had anticipated this and went ahead with their plans for the fight to be held outside of El Paso, on a disputed stretch of land in the middle of the Rio Grande.[65] The intrusion by the state was met with stiff resistance from local politicians and the populous.[66]

City officials and local residents from West Texas did not welcome the Rangers, as they planned the Fitzsimmons and Maher fight. El Paso mayor Colonel Bob Campbell and the city council called an emergency session and passed several resolutions denouncing "in strong terms" the actions of the governor. The council asserted the city's right to enforce laws without the governor's interference. It became obvious at this point that the issue went beyond a boxing match and the desire to evade the law on one single occasion. Underlying the official defiance was a common desire to use El Paso's sister city to circumvent the law on a regular basis. Moreover, prominent citizens and businessmen participated prominently in this institutionalized behavior. The business

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[65] The prizefight took place on the Mexican side of the river across from a small town called Langtry, Texas, in the Big Bend region. Jack Martin, *Border Boss: Captain John R. Hughes, Texas Ranger* (Austin: State House Press, 1990), p. 163.

[66] "Fighting the Gamblers in the Early Days, Rangers Sent Here Twice Against Protest," *Pioneer News Observer*, August 1970, p. 4, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

elite, for instance, generally looked upon gambling as a lucrative and necessary business for the border region that could be safely promoted on the other side of the border and beyond the watchful eyes of state authorities seeking to enforce prohibition laws and other such "progressive" statutes. State authority, in other words, represented an intrusion in local affairs and local elites could evade the law almost at will.[67]

Local residents also resisted the governor's mobilization of the Rangers, suggesting that the defiance of state authority went beyond the local elites. One of the Rangers in El Paso explained that the crowd that gathered for the prizefight had openly threatened the Rangers while they patrolled El Paso.[68] Several cases of violence, including gunfights between the Rangers and local residents, occurred in the city limits. Popular discontent towards the Rangers was widespread throughout the city and among all ranks of society, including the city administration and police.

The 1896 prizefight was not the only instance that demonstrated the unique challenges that West Texas posed for the Rangers. The case of Enefrio Baca is a case in point. Baca shot and killed a newspaper editor in Socorro, New Mexico. Texas Ranger James B. Gillette learned that the murderer was hiding out in Zaragosa, Mexico, just across from Ysleta, Texas. Assuming that any effort to extradite Baca would be futile, he and another Ranger captured Baca and brought him to New Mexico to face charges. Before Baca could be brought to Santa Fe, however, over a hundred armed men confronted Gillette in Socorro with the idea of applying their own sense of justice to

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[67] Ibid.

[68] "When the Santa Fe Windows Were Shot Out, Rangers and Citizens Battle in the Street," *El Paso Times*, December 5, 1920, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

Baca. Gillette pleaded with the mob, but the outnumbered Gillette was forced to give up Baca. The mob hanged him. The episode reiterated the defiant nature of the region to outside authority and, more importantly, reflected the power that resonated within the populous.[69]

In another example of local defiance that occurred in 1908, vigilantes confronted Captain John R. Hughes in the area near the Shafter Mines and San Antonio Canyon. Ranger Alex Ross, Ranger Sergeant J.D. Dunaway, Sam McKenzie, and a Justice of the Peace from the Shafter Mines had gone to San Antonio Cañon to arrest S. A. Wright for killing a Mexican. When they returned, approximately thirty-five armed Mexicans demanded that Wright be handed over to them. The Rangers refused and the situation grew tense, according to Hughes' report, "The Rangers refused to give [Wright] up and it looked for awhile like there was going to be war between the Rangers and the Mexicans."[70] The situation was finally resolved when the Mexican vigilantes backed down and the authorities took the prisoner to Marfa.

The Rangers also faced problems of their own doing when they aggravated local tensions. In this case, citizens of Clint, a town located southeast of El Paso, petitioned the Adjutant General for aid in keeping the peace, although they did not note the source of their concern. Justice of the Peace Homer Wells, acting on behalf of the town's citizens, asked for the Rangers.[71] Adjutant General James A. Harley responded by

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[69] "Ex-Ranger Recalls Exciting Days in Old-Time El Paso," *El Paso World News*, September 2, 1935, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

[70] Captain John R. Hughes, "Monthly Returns: Company 'D,' November 30, 1908," Adjutant General Records, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas.

[71] Ranger Force Correspondence, 1917, Adjutant General Records, Texas State Library and Archives Commission Austin, Texas.

sending group of Rangers led by Jeff Vaughn. The Rangers did not quell the "troubles" but escalated them, according to Wells:

> Some months since Clint and [the] surrounding country petitioned the state for some Rangers and in answer to that petition you sent four men, but the one whom was put in charge of the bunch (They call him Jeff Vaughn.) has acted in such a way as to cause more trouble in the past few months than has been here for months before…I hope some action will be taken at once as the longer he remains here the more liable is there be trouble.[72]

According to the petition, Jeff Vaughn assaulted an innocent Mexican man for no apparent reason. Wells also added in his letter to state that if the Rangers stayed in the area there is "liable to be serious trouble."[73] Many residents of Clint and the surrounding area had expressed to the judge that if the Harley did not act they would take matters into their own hands. The Vaughn case clearly demonstrated the disorderly nature of some Rangers, an observation that scholars like Julian Samora and Glenn Justice have also addressed.

The Rangers faced a variety of problems that were occasionally related to the great distance between Austin and West Texas and the inability of state officials to properly oversee the work of the Rangers. This distance also encouraged local officials and West Texas citizens to obey their own sense of justice. The temptation to cross the river and evade the law added to the distance.

Rangers also faced problems associated with the vice industry in El Paso. As noted earlier, the vice industry was an important economic activity. It was so important that local businessmen and the general public joined in defending it against any policies

[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

or law enforcement directives from Austin, including the Texas Rangers. Ciudad Juárez, of course, had it own vice industry and it attracted El Pasoans who simply chose to cross the river to evade the law. The bustling business devoted to vice complicated matters for the Rangers in another important way. It naturally attracted the criminal type and taxed the ability of both local as well as state enforcement bodies from applying reformist laws.

The story of vice and the Rangers changed as the West Texas economy grew and expanded, a change that had repercussions in local social relations, as well as, the role that the Rangers were to play in local affairs. By 1904, much of the entertainment or vice industry moved to Ciudad Juárez or simply relocated to El Paso's Mexican sector, Chihuahuita. This change reflected new developments in the political climate in the state and in El Paso.[74] El Paso's political power structure changed in 1902 with the election of conservative B. F. Hammett as mayor of the city. On May 3, Mayor Hammett and his councilmen passed an ordinance to curb El Paso's vice industry by removing gambling out of saloons and out of plain sight of the street. Also, saloons were forced to close on Sundays.[75] His administration, with the help of the newspaper, *El Paso Herald*, closed many of El Paso's gambling halls.[76] When local authorities threatened to continue this policy with other business establishments, many transferred their operations to Ciudad Juárez.[77] This move, which included other vice-related businesses, transformed the Mexican city and El Paso's Mexican sector into the antithesis of reform-minded

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[74] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, p. 30.
[75] Leon Metz, *El Paso Chronicles: A Record of Historical Events in El Paso, Texas* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1993), p. 140.
[76] "Fighting the Gamblers in the Early Days," *Pioneer News Observer*, August 1970, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso Texas.
[77] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, p. 31.

governments that had emerged during the Progressive Era in localities throughout Texas. Differences over the vice industry in Ciudad Juárez and El Paso divided the communities along moral, as well as, racial lines.

By late November 1904, El Paso's tolerance of its vice industry had grown thin. Some citizens complained that the city's policemen were not only drinking on duty but several of them were known to live with prostitutes.[78] In addition, local authorities learned that many of the prostitutes were renting apartments in "decent" neighborhoods due to the eradication of vice in the city. Under intense pressure from one of the city's civic groups, the Citizen's League, newly elected Mayor Charles R. Morehead, Sheriff J. H. Boone, and the Texas Rangers started to enforce all of the state's "blue laws," which made Sunday commerce of any type illegal. As a result, thousands of Americans crossed the bridge into Juárez and indulged in all the city had to offer.[79]

Over four-thousand El Pasoans flocked to Juarez on November 20, 1904, and spent an exuberant amount of money, while leaving many of El Paso's merchants holding the bag. After three weeks of enforcing the state's blue laws, the campaign came to an end. Mayor Morehead had revealed that if all of the state's laws were strictly enforced, El Paso's commercial prominence over Ciudad Juárez would fall to the wayside. El Paso gradually opened up its saloons and gambling halls and by January 1, 1905 all of its vice-related business had resumed at their original location along Utah Street. News had

[78] H. Gordon Frost, *The Gentlemen's Club: The Story of Prostitution in El Paso* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1983), p. 155.
[79] Ibid, p. 158.

spread throughout Texas and the U.S. Southwest that El Paso's city administration was lenient in its attitude toward vice.[80]

The city's new-found policy on vice may have succeeded but it did not remove the Rangers from West Texas. This was due in great part to the fact that El Paso's new vice industry continued to attract criminals, some of whom were involved in other activities beyond El Paso. The border city claimed an arrest every fifteen minutes.[81] In addition to petty crimes within the city limits, criminals were stealing cattle and raiding ranches throughout West Texas, especially along the border. Therefore, increased criminal activity in the surrounding communities attracted presented the Texas Rangers with another set of challenges.

The number of criminals in the San Elizario, Ysleta, and El Paso district greatly outnumbered local peace officers at the turn of the century. The center for El Paso's criminal activity was an area known as "Pirate Island." A small Ranger detachment consisting of four men and led by Captain Frank Jones, along with the help of El Paso deputy sheriff, R.E. Bryant Company "D" enforced the law on the island. Captain Jones' death at Pirate Island revealed the extent of criminal activity in West Texas and the Rangers' ability to effectively regulate it. Captain Jones was mortally wounded on June 30, 1893 in a gun fight with criminal elements at Pirate Island.[82]

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[80] Ibid, p. 160.
[81] "Ex-Ranger Recalls Exciting Days in Old-Time El Paso," *El Paso World News*, July 14, 1935; "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.
[82] Paul Cool, "El Paso's First Real Lawman, Texas Ranger Mark (Marcus) Ludwick," *Quarterly of the National Association for Outlaws and Lawman History* (October-December 2001); "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

Pirate Island was a land mass that had formed as a result of the shifting currents on the Rio Grande. The "island" was comprised of 15,000 acres of land that lay between the original river bed and the channel of the Rio Grande. According to the International Boundary Commission, the original dry river bed was the boundary line making the "island" part of the United States. However, half a mile across the line was Mexico, which made for an easy escape for smugglers or suspected cattle thieves.[83] It was covered with brush and became a rendezvous for a large criminal element in the area. Texas authorities had difficulty patrolling the area since the Mexican line was so close and could place the Rangers out of their jurisdiction and at the mercy of Mexican officials. The criminal ring that used the island as their headquarters was led by the notorious Holguín family which was involved in stealing cattle and conducting other depredations in the region.

The death of Captain Jones ushered in new leadership and more problems for the Rangers. Under the captainship of John R. Hughes (1893-1915), the Texas Rangers sought more collaborative relationships with both local and Mexican officials to apprehend suspected criminals. However, efforts to bridge the gaps between the two communities never fully succeeded. By 1907, depressed economic conditions in northern Mexico and the advent of the Mexican Revolution created a fertile ground for revolutionary activity and banditry.[84] The conditions instigated by the revolution,

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[83] "Battle of Tres Jacales, 25 Years Ago Recalled, Rangers to Ride Into Trap and Leader is Killed," *El Paso Times*, date unknown, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

[84] Mario T. Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 172.

especially depredations on West Texas ranches by raiders that the U.S. authorities always considered bandits, prompted the Rangers to utilize brutal tactics and crude justice aimed at Mexicans who were suspected of participating in the raids or of collaborating. Throughout the period of the Mexican Revolution, all Mexicans would emerge as a target of the Texas Rangers.

The appearance of Captain Hughes as the new head of Company "D" marked a shift in how state authority was established and challenged in the region. This was due primarily to Hughes' ability to nurture cooperative relationships with authorities in the region, as well as in Ciudad Juárez. For example, Hughes along with other Ranger officers developed a friendship with Francisco "Pancho" Villa, the most powerful revolutionary figure in northern Mexico between 1910 and 1920. Hughes was also instrumental in grounding the authority of the Rangers on positive relationships with some local Mexicans. Hughes understood that the Mexican population in West Texas greatly outnumbered Anglos and often would challenge local Anglo American authority.[85]

In another example, Captain Jim M. Fox of Marfa, Texas, befriended Villa and utilized his services on several occasions to apprehend Mexicans suspected of a variety of crimes in the area:

> …The best friend the Rangers ever had on the Rio Grande, old Pancho [Villa]…why, he's executed many a bad 'un for me!...[86]

According to Fox, several Rangers chased after three Mexicans suspected of thievery in 1915. One of the Rangers was shot dead. Across the river near the scene of the shooting

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[85] Coolidge, *Fighting Men of the West*, p. 148.
[86] Claude Leroy Douglas, *The Gentlemen in the White Hats: Dramatic Episodes in the History of the Texas Rangers* (Dallas: Southwest Press, 1934), pp. 165-166.

was a battalion of Villista troops. Fox arranged a meeting with General Villa in Ciudad Juárez regarding the apprehension of the men who killed the Ranger. Villa agreed to have the men captured and executed. When Fox returned to Marfa he received word that Villa had apprehended the men and asked if the Rangers cared to be present during the execution. Ranger medical officer, Dr. Goodwin, witnessed the execution in Ciudad Juárez and gave the spent cartridges to Captain Fox as proof of their execution.[87] Captain Fox understood the advantages of his relationship with the powerful revolutionary and remained loyal to Villa throughout the Revolution.

Despite the friendly relations that Hughes and Fox were able to develop, increasing violence undermined hopes for lasting racial peace. Livestock thefts and border raids plagued ranchers living in remote areas in West Texas.[88] Many of the bands exploited the lucrative business of smuggling arms and livestock to advance their own financial agendas or to seek retribution for the injustices Anglos had visited on the Mexican population.[89] Throughout the early twentieth century as border depredations became more frequent, criminality became synonymous with "Mexican." As a result, Ranger treatment of Mexicans became harsher and more indiscriminate.

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[87] Ibid, p. 168.

[88] Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 6.

[89] The term "Mexican bandit" is complex and projects different meanings. The bandit is understood from two separate perspectives. Anglo-American society viewed the Mexican bandit as an outlaw and/or fugitive. Mexicans, on the other hand, held a starkly different view of banditry as a struggle of an oppressed people to assert themselves and defend what they felt was rightfully theirs. Albert Camarillo and Pedro Castillo, eds., *Furia Y Muerte: Los Bandidos Chicanos* (Los Angeles: Aztlan Publications, 1973), p. 3. Albert Camarillo and Pedro Castillo, apply Hobsbawm's definition to Mexican banditry. For Camarillo and Castillo, Mexican social bandits were not law breakers, but victims of Anglo invasion and resistant. Furthermore, Mexican banditry was a form of retribution and for the purpose of survival. For this study it will be understood that the "Mexican bandit" is not just an outlaw or fugitive, but a social actor resistant to Anglo dominance. According to Eric J. Hobsbawm, "bandits reflect the disruption of an entire society, the rise of new classes and social structures, the resistance of entire communities or people against the

An increasing number of Mexican raids on American ranches and other forms of violent behavior also contributed to a deteriorating situation in many parts of Texas, especially in areas close to the border. Unstable economic conditions in northern Mexico during the Revolution forced the peasant class to reject their oppressed and impoverished state and act against their oppressor. The peasant turned social bandit gave expression to vengeance on the rich.[90] This response to injustice expanded across the border, as increasing numbers of Mexicans also decided to even scores in Texas. The sparsely patrolled border created an opportunity for many of Mexico's poor border residents to prey on the goods and herds of border ranchers. For some bandits, the decision to raid American ranches was shaped by need, hunger, and most of all, the mistreatment at the hands of many of the gringos.[91] The isolated ranch incursions often spurned a series of vengeful acts by ranchers and Rangers that perpetuated the cycle of violence and animosity throughout the region.

In one such case in Ft. Hancock, Mexicans were held hostage by a Texas Ranger who was appointed by the local Sheriff to deal with the "problem" of Mexicans who were allegedly stealing goods and transporting them to Mexico. The Ranger held the Mexicans with an iron chain. According to historian Mary Rak, "One by one the prisoners' necks were clasped by a padlocked chain until the whole length of log chain was alive with

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destruction of its way of life." Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltc., 1969), p. 13.

[90] Camarillo and Castillo, *Furia y Muerte*, p. 1.

[91] Tony Cano and Ann Sochat, *Bandido: The True Story of Chico Cano, The Last Western Bandit* (Canutillo, TX: Reata Publishing, 1997), pp. 52-53.

angry, bewildered, and frightened men."[92] The Ranger would not release them until stolen goods transported to Mexico were returned to the United States. The tactic worked. Items were returned to the United States and the hostages were released. Many local residents did not question the methods of the Ranger as long as the actions produced desirable results.[93]

By the mid-1910s, relationships between Mexicans, local authorities and ranchers were highly racialized, however, they did not always reflect the obvious racial character. For instance, some ranchers in West Texas had business and personal dealings with the same bandits they were complaining about to the Rangers and local authorities. Ranchers often forged contracts with bandits to recover their own cattle or steal cattle from rival ranches. However, unlike the friendly relationship between Captain Fox and Pancho Villa, these relationships were highly volatile and fluid. Ranchers manipulated their relationship with Rangers to opt out of contracts with bandits and created distrust and animosity between the two sides. And after all is said and done the relationships remained highly racialized.[94]

The relationships between the bandits, rancher, and Rangers grew increasingly ambiguous as the political tides changed in Mexico during the Revolution. In order to obtain some protection for their property, ranchers forged alliances with revolutionary factions near the area. These alliances did not always coincide with the revolutionary

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[92] Mary Rak, *Border Patrol* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1938), p. 3.
[93] Ibid., p. 2.
[94] Several scholars have discussed that the practice of stealing cattle was a prominent activity not dominated by on particular group but exercised by all. Anglo ranchers stole from each other and, in this example, elicited the help of Mexican "bandit gangs" to retrieve cattle. For more, see: Cano and Sochat, *Bandido*, p. 48-49; Samora, *Gunpowder Justice*, pp. 48-53.

minded bandits in the region. For many ranchers and Rangers, it was difficult to tell if a Mexican was a bandit or if he was a friend:

> …We knew what we were up against when we seen a bunch of Comanches; there were two things to do, fight or run. You meet a bunch of Mexicans and you don't know what you're up against, whether they are civilized or not, [so you just fight].[95]

Although observers like Neill wondered about the loyalty of local Mexicans, he was not unlike the Anglo ranchers and Rangers who ultimately opted for classifying all Mexicans as criminal and threatening.

A daughter of a Ranger made the following observation to underscore the fact that Whites were infuriated with the Mexican raids on Anglo ranches:

> …The [Rangers] were popped off easily and the outlaws stole more Texas cattle than ever [and] they also carried more contraband back and forth across the Rio Grande…These conditions made the Texans furious…[96]

The loss of property and lives led to a public demand on state and federal officials to provide more protection. The response was a massive military campaign directed at the violence associated with the San Diego revolt in Deep South Texas. It primarily involved the Texas Rangers and the U.S. Army.[97] Its focus may have been Deep South Texas, but its message of Mexican banditry and a disloyal Mexican community spread throughout the border region, however.

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[95] Cano and Sochat, *Bandido*, p. 49.

[96] An interview with Mrs. Mattie Baca, daughter of Texas Ranger Joe Sitters of West Texas, was conducted by *El Paso Times* writer Dorothea Magadalene Fox in 1963. In her interview she recounts some of her father's exploits prior to his death at the hands of bandit Chico Cano and outlines the conditions experienced by the rangers in West Texas during the mid-1910s. Dorothea Magadalene Fox, "Early Day Rangers, Figured Pretty Good," *El Paso Times*, October 27, 1963, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

Confrontations between the Rangers and bandits often resulted in a great deal violence. A contributing factor was an understanding among the Texas Rangers that no time would be lost in avenging a comrade's death.[98] In West Texas the violent relationship between Texas Ranger Joe Sitters and bandit Chico Cano reflected the overall conflict evident throughout the Texas-Mexican border. Joe Sitters owned a ranch near Valentine, Texas. He had worked as a border guard and Texas Ranger, and had come to know Chico Cano. Sitters despised Cano's arrogance and lack of respect for Anglo authority. Because of his intense hatred for Cano, Sitters accused the Mexican of every ranch raid or wrong doing that occurred in the area. In one incident, some of Sitters' neighbors had lost thirteen horses to four armed Mexicans who claimed to be from Pecos, about one-hundred and ten miles northeast of Valentine. Sitters refused to accept that the Mexicans were from Pecos and insisted that the notorious Chico Cano and his friends had taken the horses.[99] Cano fought a number of skirmishes with the Rangers, sheriffs, and ranchmen along the border partly as a result of his reputation as a bandit that Sitters promoted.[100]

On January 23, 1913, Sitters, Jack Howard, U.S. Customs Inspector, and J. A. Harvis, an inspector for the Texas Cattle Raisers Association, set out to capture Cano because Sitters accused him and his men of movig stolen horses and cattle across the river to Mexico. Their first move was to raid a Mexican wake on the Texas side of the

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[97] For more on the "Bandit Wars" see, Harris III and Sadler, *Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, pp. 248-297.
[98] Douglas, *Gentlemen in the White Hats*, p. 166.
[99] Cano and Sochat, *Bandido*, p. 55.
[100] "Early Day Rangers, Figured Pretty Good," *El Paso Times*, October 27, 1963, "Texas Rangers" Vertical File, Southwest Collection, Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library, El Paso, Texas.

Rio Grande, in Presidio County, believing that Chico Cano was present. Sitters called Cano to come out while Cano's father tried to stall the authorities who in turn threatened to burn the house down if he did not surrender. After a series of inquiries regarding the safe release of the women and children present at the wake and Cano's safety while in custody, he gave himself up to Sitters.[101]

Everyone at the wake knew that Cano would not make it to Marfa alive. The Rangers had a reputation of killing Mexicans who "attempted to escape." Before the posse could get too far from Pilares, Cano's younger brother organized several family members and friends residing on the Mexican side to rescue Chico. A gun battle ensued and all three of the law enforcement officers were wounded. Howard later died from his wounds. The incident spawned a series of blood oaths and vows of vengeance. The group that rescued Cano from Sitters became known as the "Cano Gang" or the "Pilares band of outlaws." A succession of ranch raids occurred a few weeks after the episode and was reported to be the work of Cano's gang. The accuracy of the accusations was questionable. Nevertheless, the fact that the bandits were armed and willing to engage U.S. authorities created great anxiety among Anglos in the area.[102] The problems between Sitters and Cano reached their boiling point in May 1915.

On May 21, Ranger captain Jim M. Fox of Marfa, Texas, organized a party of Rangers and local ranchers to investigate claims of stolen horses. Villista soldiers had informed his friend Joe Sitters that Cano had a large herd of smuggled horses and mules.

[101] Cano and Sochat, *Bandido*, pp. 56-57.
[102] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

Sitters saw the opportunity to help Villa and finally kill Cano.[103] The feud reached its climax on May 24, 1916, when Cano ambushed and killed Joe Sitters. Personal vendettas and "blood oaths" were assumed after Sitters was killed and indiscriminate violence ensued. The Rangers would transcend the personal feud into full blown racialized conflict.

The responsibility of maintaining the peace in the area east of El Paso was to Captain Jim M. Fox and Texas Ranger Company "B."[104] In many cases, Fox recruited local cattlemen who had grown increasingly impatient with Mexicans they suspected of being bandits. As Fox investigated the raids, he began to pay closer attention to a small village known as EL Porvenir.[105] The small community lay on the banks of the Rio Grande and was located approximately one-hundred and seventy miles southeast of El Paso, across from Pilares, Chihuahua, Mexico. The village mostly consisted of farmers and small scale ranchers. Some of the inhabitants had lived in the village for up to six or seven years and were citizens of the United States.[106] Local ranchers and Captain Fox agreed that El Porvenir harbored bandits and needed to be cleaned out.[107] The posse also

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[103] According to Joe Sitters' daughter, Mattie Baca, Sitters was a personal friend of Pancho Villa. They had exchanged pleasantries on numerous occasions and even exchanged gifts. Baca stated that Sitters had a tremendous amount of respect for Villa and felt that he was a good leader for his people. "Early Day Rangers, Figured Pretty Good," *El Paso Times*, October 27, 1963.

[104] "Partial List of Texas Ranger Company and Unit Commanders," http://www.texasranger.org/ReCenter/Captains.pdf, (accessed on June 7, 2007) Texas Ranger Research Center, Waco, Texas.

[105] The village of El Porvenir, Texas, is spelled differently by various authors. For the purpose of this study, the spelling and reference to the village are based on the following: Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*.

[106] Testimony given by "Witnesses in U.S." and signed by Capt. Anderson, Co. G. 8th Cavalry, Camp Evett, Valentine, Texas and Sgt. Bruin. *Files from the Adjutant General, Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force*, 1919, pp. 831-862.

[107] Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 36.

believed that the residents of El Porvenir and its sister city across the river, acted as spies and accomplices for Chico Cano.[108]

On the evening of January 23, 1918, the Rangers and several local ranchers surrounded the village, rounded up the Mexicans, and held them at gunpoint while they searched the houses for stolen "loot" from the nearby Brite Ranch which had recently been raided. The Rangers found some items like soap and other small items from the ranch and proceeded to disarm the village. The Rangers arrested three Mexicans and questioned them before releasing them the following day.

Three days later, the Texas Rangers approached Camp Evetts, an Eighth Cavalry border outpost located near El Porvenir, where they presented Capt. Henry H. Henderson with a letter from his commanding officer, Col. George T. Langhorne, requesting army assistance at the village.[109] The U.S. Army's Eighth Cavalry had previously investigated the Brite Ranch raid and some of the soldiers suspected an ulterior motive by the Rangers. One of the cavalry officers, Captain Anderson, had already found that the Porvenir residents were innocent of wrong doing. He had found that all of the men were accounted for on the day of the Brite Ranch raid and none of them knew of the raid until it was over.[110] After confirming the validity of the letter and order, Capt. Anderson nevertheless mobilized his men and accompanied the Rangers and ranchers to El Porvenir. Despite Capt. Anderson's suspicions, the soldiers and Rangers acted with

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[108] Mattie Baca reiterated what the Rangers and local cattlemen thought of Porvenir. She also stated that it was believed that many of Chico Cano's cousins and other family members lived in the village and used the locale to move goods freely across the river. "Early Day Rangers," October 27, 1963; Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 36.

[109] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

[110] Testimony given by "Witnesses in U.S.," *Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force*, pp. 849-853.

impunity. They ambushed the village in the late hours of the night, some wearing masks while others hid their identity with the shadows of the night.

While the Army secured the perimeter of the village, the Rangers forced themselves into the homes, removed the men from their beds, and beat them on the way to an isolated area a few minutes away from their homes.[111] The Rangers also ransacked the village while the cavalrymen stood watch over the inhabitants, who were disoriented and huddling around a makeshift campfire. As the Rangers finished searching the homes, they requested the army to wait for them just outside the village.

The Rangers began to separate the men from the women and children and led them a short distance away to a bluff where they shot the Mexicans in cold blood.[112] Ranger captain J.M. Fox later reported to the Adjutant General that when they removed the men for questioning they were fired upon in the dark and were forced to defend themselves killing all the men they had rounded up.[113] The Rangers rode away in a drunken stupor shouting "Comanche yells."[114]

The army collected the bodies on the morning of January 28, 1918, and informed the survivors about what had occurred. A local schoolteacher named Harry Warren

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[111] The sworn testimonies of Librada Montoya Jaquez, Juana Zonilla Florez, Felipa Mendez Castaneda, and Eulalia Gonzales Hernandes gave consistent accounts of how their husbands were taken from their homes and beaten by Rangers and ranchmen in the village. *Files from the Adjutant General, Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force*, 1919, pp. 831-862.

[112] Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 39.

[113] Letter sent to the Adjutant General by Capt. J.M. Fox of Company B in Marfa, Texas on June 11, 1918. *Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force*, January 1919, pp. 838-839.

[114] Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 39.

policed the area and informed the women of the circumstances of the killing.[115] Many of the families collected their loved ones and took them to Mexico for burial where the rest of the residents had escaped. The village and the surrounding area of the upper Big Bend were abandoned for fear that the Rangers would return to "finish the job."[116] They abandoned the harvest and livestock and fled to Mexico. Some of the bodies collected at El Porvenir were mutilated by stab wounds to the face or "chopped up with a knife" by the Rangers. According to reports filed by the United States Army, the survivors had few options regarding justice or legal retribution. Only one of the twelve widows, who were interviewed, for instance, mentioned any contact with Mexican officials. Moreover, the soldiers denied any knowledge of the incident.[117]

Mexicans from Mexico and the United States expressed outrage and threatened to retaliate against the Rangers and Anglos. The threat of violence from Mexicans was serious as far as Captain Anderson was concerned. He insisted that the governor remove the Rangers from the vicinity immediately "instead of proving themselves [observers] of the peace & dignity of the state, they are proving themselves its worse enemies."[118]

The wholesale murder at El Porvenir exposed the extent of the Ranger violence against Mexicans as well as the sense of impunity with which they acted. The massacre also exposed the deep divisions that emerged during the 1910s between Anglos and

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[115] Testimony given by "Witnesses in U.S." and signed by Capt. Anderson, Co. G. 8th Cavalry, Camp Evett, Valentine, Texas and Sgt. Bruin. *Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force,* January 1919, p. 847.
[116] Justice, *Revolution on the Rio Grande*, p. 40.
[117] Testimony of Juana Zonilla Flores, April 5, 1918 and taken by Patrick Kelly, 1st Lieut., Cavalry, N.A., Summary Cort. *Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force*, January 30, 1919, p. 844.
[118] Captain Anderson's letter to Governor Hobby, *Joint Committee of the Senate and House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force*, January 1919, pp. 849-851.

Mexicans in West Texas. At the same time, the brutal tactics of the Texas Rangers and ranchers worsened racialized relations.

Conclusion

The Texas Rangers served as the state's primary police force in West Texas throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Their work in pacifying and displacing Native Americans and Mexicans to make way for Anglo settlers in the late nineteenth century worsened an already troubled relationship. In the Anglo community, they were welcomed as a necessary police force but were questioned when they began to enforce "progressive laws that prohibited alcoholic consumption and other "immoral" behavior. The violent response by Mexicans to the heavy-handed methods of the Rangers ushered in another conflictual period during which the Rangers targeted the Mexican community in an effort to pacify the region and discipline the resident Mexican population. Anglos welcomed this shift in the exercise of Ranger authority. The West Texas region, however, posed special challenges for the Texas Rangers, including a general state of lawlessness, distance from centers of authority, Mexico as a safe have for illicit behavior and a staging area for violent forays into Texas.

As the twentieth century drew near and the social and political climate changed in West Texas, so did the Rangers. Initially West Texas functioned as a somewhat politically independent region because the long distances made it difficult for the state government to exercise authority over its people. The existence of gambling and sporting houses in El Paso at a time when the state was being swept by a wave of reformist sentiment underscores the independent nature of life in El Paso. El Paso's popular

support for its entertainment industry was a barrier to state policy, as well as, to attempts by the Texas Rangers to enforce the law. The political climate eventually changed in West Texas in large part because of the more effective imposition of state authority in El Paso. The entertainment industry was forced to close, but it reopened across the river, in Ciudad Juárez.

The Ranger approach to law enforcement in the 1890s under the captainship of John R. Hughes first sought to nurture close relationships with some of the area's most influential and notorious individuals, including the revolutionary Pancho Villa.[119] Rangers also understood that local support in the form of informants and alliances with local ranchers and revolutionary figures could help them do their job. Still, despite the collaborative efforts, especially under the leadership of Captain Hughes, racial tension escalated during the early years of the twentieth century.

Ranch raids caused great distress among property owners living along the international boundary. The economic and political instability in Mexico during the early twentieth century had marginalized much of Mexico's poor. Driven by need and retribution, various individuals sought social justice through banditry. Many Mexican residents residing on both sides of the river accepted the bandits as heroes, as champions, and fighters for justice.[120] However, Anglo ranchers and authorities, specifically the Texas Rangers, viewed the bandits as nothing more than arrogant outlaws that threatened the lives and livelihood of residents in West Texas. The violent relationship between

[119] "Early Day Rangers, Figured Pretty Good," *El Paso Times*, October 27, 1963.
[120] Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 13.

Sitters and Cano reflected the larger struggle between law enforcement and social bandits.

The skirmishes between the Rangers and bandits had remained largely isolated events as a byproduct of complex alliances between ranchers, Mexican revolutionary factions, and American law enforcement. Throughout the early 1910s, however, their confrontations had developed an environment of distrust and animosity. The Texas Rangers utilized humiliating and brutal tactics, at times, accepted by Anglo residents. Mexicans captured by Texas Rangers were often murdered before legally charged or tried in a court of law. On the other hand, the popular support that Anglos believed Mexican bandits enjoyed made them apprehensive and fearful. Many Anglo residents in West Texas categorized all Mexicans as bandits and potentially dangerous. By the mid-1910s, social relations in West Texas had become thoroughly racialized.

Chapter 3

Dead Lines, Defiance, and Race in El Paso

"...Entonces estaba el Segundo Barrio lleno de pura mexicanada, se imagina…" (Then there were the residents of the Second Ward, full of *mexicaness*, can you believe it?) —Hortencia Villegas, eyewitness and survivor of the El Paso riots of January 13, 1916[121]

Introduction

The Mexican Revolution had a major impact on the social, cultural and political landscape of Mexico and the United States. The horror and ideals of the movement were obvious as it spread across Mexico. Also, the Revolution extended its reach into the United States, especially into the Southwest, as revolutionaries migrated across the international border during the early 1900s. For the United States, increased political activity associated with the fighting in Mexico required vigilance and expanded authority among its border patrolling organizations. Locals in places like Columbus, New Mexico, Presidio, Laredo and El Paso, Texas, were also drawn into the conflict as participants in the Revolution as Mexican insurgents who claimed to be embracing a broad transnational cause or redressing local wrongs. Others participated in General Pershing's "Punitive Expedition" or in Mexico's army of "Dorados" in Chihuahua headed by General Francisco Villa.[122]

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[121] Hortencia Villegas, interview by Oscar J. Martínez, February 17, 1976, interview 235, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.

[122] For readings on the Mexican Revolution and its impact on northern Mexico and the southwestern part of the United States, see: Oscar Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juarez Since 1848* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); W. H. Timmons, *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Charles Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004); Mario García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

This chapter seeks to demonstrate that the "border troubles" associated with the Revolution gave shape to a disciplined society that reinforced racial segregation within El Paso and, to a certain extent, between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. A U.S. policy sought to pacify the region with vigilance and punitive measures. It began in 1916, when approximately sixteen American engineers were killed in cold blood in Santa Ysabel, Chihuahua, by Pancho Villa's army. When the bodies arrived in El Paso, rioting broke out against residents in the Mexican sector of the city, known as "Chihuahuita." The event demonstrated in stark fashion that Mexicans, despite their citizenship or long residence in El Paso, could be easily identified as the local enemy, the proxies for the Mexican revolutionaries who had taken American lives. Anglo rioters marched into "Chihuahuita" and assaulted every Mexican they came across. The riot of January 1916, triggered by an international incident, strengthened the hand of authorities, including local officials and military forces stationed in the city. Moreover, the riot and the military pacification left a more rigid set of racialized relations.

The incident involved local police officers, four companies of the Sixteenth Infantry from Ft. Bliss, and a mob of American citizens who sought to "clean up El Paso Street." Various groups took to the streets to disperse and contain Mexican residents to the Chihuahuita section of the city. Anger over the "Santa Ysabel Massacre," as some in the media called it, intensified and was countered by martial law instituted by General John J. Pershing to avert further "race rioting."[123] At the same time, riot control reports were leaked to the press and by word of mouth that the reaction was spreading. Secret

[123] "Americans Fighting Mexicans in El Paso; United States Soldiers Engaged in Street Brawls in Which Knives are Used," *New York Times*, January 14, 1916.

meetings were taking place among cattlemen and miners to organize a revenge expedition in Mexico "with or without the consent of the Carranza government."[124]

The episode gave rise to ill feeling that had been brewing in El Paso since the Revolution. Many Anglos were increasingly fearful of an armed insurrection by the revolutionary minded local Mexican community. The riot also raised security concerns among city and military officials and polarized the city along racial lines. Various law enforcement officials, military personnel and vigilante groups played a major role in defining a racial line of separation while Mexicans in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez contributed to the separation with their own self-defining activities. Most observers became convinced that the Revolution had reached home. In order to better appreciate the significance of the riot in Chihuahuita, it is necessary to first review the history of the border area of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. In the process, we will outline the process of which Mexicans became the "enemy" other.

The New Socio-Economy, the Spawning of Conflict, and "Bad Blood"

The riot and its consequences can be best understood by examining the history of the development of the El Paso/Ciudad Juárez region. The industrialization of the region began around the time that the Southern Pacific Railroad reached El Paso on May 19, 1881. Prior to its arrival, El Paso was known as a quiet and practically irrelevant village of just 800 residents. Change, however, came quickly. One of the most notorious lawmen in El Paso's history described the transformation, or "social activity," that affected his world:

[124] "Mexicans Chased Across Border," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.

> Bankers, merchants, capitalists, real estate dealers, cattlemen, miners, railroad men, gamblers, saloon–keepers, and sporting people of both sexes flocked to town…A saloon was opened on almost every corner of the town with many in between, but if one wished a seat at the gaming tables he had to come early or he could not get within thirty feet of them.[125]

Local leaders saw a different, broader challenge. They sought to effectively manage the rapid and often chaotic development of a socio-economy made all the more complicated by a volatile international setting characterized by pre-Revolution activity and the arrival of increasing number of destitute immigrants, including political exiles with radical ideas. It is no accident, then, that the history of law enforcement and border surveillance began in tandem as the region witnessed the "booming" growth at the close of the nineteenth century. The events of the time period revealed the unavoidable ties shared by border communities and their residents. In the process, law enforcement and border patrolling officials came into conflict with the local residents, especially Mexicans from Mexico and the United States.

El Paso began to look like a modern industrialized U.S. city in the late 1880s with banks, newspapers, churches, a fully functioning city government, and a hotel. A school board was elected in December of 1882 and the first public school opened in March 1883. The first "Black School" had been built and Olivas V. Aoy had organized a school for Mexican-origin children.[126] Moreover, the Mexican Central Railroad Company connected Mexico's northern outpost to its interior in 1884. Mexico's industrialized northern region attracted foreign capital and stimulated the importation of northern

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[125] James B. Gillett, *Six Years with the Texas Rangers* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1921), pp. 322-323.

[126] Timmons, *El Paso*, p. 198.

Mexican agricultural and mining products into the United States. By the 1890s, Mexican railroads had reached the urban centers of the north from central Mexico and places like Ciudad Juarez also began to prosper and exhibit the accoutrements of a modern city. Mexico's labor population grew substantially during the late nineteenth century, especially along the international boundary; thus contributing not only to the population growth of a sparsely inhabited area but to the overall economy and spending power of the region.[127]

In order to keep up with its northern neighbor, Ciudad Juárez, known as El Paso del Norte until 1888, requested special concessions from the Mexican government to stimulate the economy and retain its work force. Special concessions were made possible with the tariff-free trade zone. Residents of northern Chihuahua had signed a petition requesting that the government to extend the Free Trade Zone to their region because of lack of employment opportunities and the high cost of living. In January 1885, the Mexican government responded by extending the trade zone along the entire northern border for a distance of twenty kilometers from the boundary line. El Paso del Norte subsequently entered the more modern era of economic development. Within a short period of time, modern structures were raised in El Paso del Norte and foreigners brought capital and buying power to the once sleepy northern frontier.[128] The standard of living rose along with wages. Exotic and profitable foreign goods made their way into the Mexican city.

[127] Ibid, p. 20.
[128] Ibid, p. 22-23.

The Free Trade Zone was not without controversy. El Paso merchants, for instance, opposed it because they feared that the smugglers would import the duty-free goods and undermine their businesses. Many of them pleaded to the U.S. government to intervene. U.S. officials responded with a series of articles and decrees that placed hefty tariffs on goods produced and imported from the Free Trade Zone.[129] As tariffs began to place unbearable restraints in the area and contraband made its way into the interior of Mexico, the economic potential of the region slowly began to wither.

The Mexican currency began to fail, overbearing tariffs of the Free Trade Zone limited trade, and the absence of water for farming complicated northern Mexico's relationship with American consumers and businesses, thus intensifying the international tensions inherited from a conflictual past. At times, the economic dilemma and complaints by merchants prompted city officials to call for diplomatic and military assistance to resolve local differences that occasionally achieved international importance. Calling for interventions from higher authorities, in other words, had become a "natural" option along the international border.

As U.S. officials and El Paso merchants challenged the Free Trade Zone businesses closed up shop while some moved across the border to El Paso.[130] This caused many laborers to move to the United States in search of work. The depopulation of Ciudad Juárez crippled the economic promise of the 1880s. El Paso, on the other

[129] Ibid, p. 28.
[130] Mexico eliminated the Free Trade Zone on July 1, 1905. Official explanation stated that improved transportation lines from Mexico City to the northern cities made domestic goods more accessible. Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, pp. 19-37.

hand, faced overpopulated neighborhoods, health issues associated with a growing poor population, and unemployment.[131]

When merchants from Ciudad Juárez tried to recapture the economic prosperity of the past, they introduced activities like gambling, cockfights, and prizefighting during the 1880s. These activities, which were to give Mexican border towns the reputation of coddling illicit activities for the pleasure of American visitors, also came to places like Ciudad Juárez in response to the activities of reformers in the United States. Ciudad Juárez thus turned to tourism as well as the vices that the socially and politically conservative El Paso had suppressed.[132]

The construction of tourist-oriented facilities, such as the bull ring and race track solidified Ciudad Juarez's reputation as a center of recreation for Americans. As Oscar Martinez stated, "entertainment became a prominent part of the town's livelihood, ushering in the age of notoriety."[133] Reformers brought other changes to the border. As the temperance cause grew at the turn of the century, the demand for the Rangers increased in places like El Paso to enforce laws against the consumption of alcohol as well as prizefighting and gambling.

Though numerous confrontations occurred between law enforcement officials and El Paso residents in the late nineteenth century, none were as significant or telling as the

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[131] According to the 1920 Census, El Paso's population had increased approximately 97% since 1910. United States Bureau of the Census, *Population of Principal Cities [Texas] from earliest census to 1920*, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 1920.

[132] For information on Texas's progressive initiative, see: Lewis Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973); Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Jacquelyn Masur McElhaney, *Pauline Periwinkle and Progressive Reform in Dallas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998)

[133] Martínez, *Border Boom Town*, p. 30.

San Elizario Salt Wars of 1877. The conflict revealed the growing tension between Anglo entrepreneurs and Mexican residents and highlights the use of local and state-based authority to impose law that disagreed with the daily and accepted practice of the locals. Resistance by the residents in turn called for a greater number of law enforcement and supervision.[134]

The Salt Wars involved a dispute over the free access to local salt licks located in El Paso County. They had been used by both American citizens and Mexican nationals; however, local officials privatized the area and denied them access. Many residents continued to frequent the salt licks and eventually decided to challenge the privatization of the land. Louis Cardis, an Italian stagecoach manager and local political boss, and Judge Charles Howard, who had bought the disputed land and declared it off limits to local residents, became embroiled in the early phase of the confrontation. The conflict worsened when the Texas Rangers and the U.S. Army arrived to handle the potential uprising. Finally, in 1878, after a haphazard investigation and the reestablishment of Ft. Bliss to suppress future uprisings, El Paso area residents were given free access to the salt under the watchful eye of a Texas Ranger.[135]

The Salt War underscored two developments that were to re-appear during the 1916 riot. First, residents were "swept up" by circumstances that quickly took a life of their own. In the process, residents took the law into their own hands and violently expressed latent racial feelings. Second, the opposing factions generally divided

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[134] For more on the San Elizario Salt Wars, see: C. L. Sonnichsen, *The El Paso Salt War* (El Paso: Hertzog, 1961); Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1935); García, *Desert Immigrants*.
[135] Timmons, *El Paso*, p. 196.

themselves along racial lines that transcended citizenship and class. Also, the conflict left a bitter impression on many Mexicans, especially the merchants who were to be excluded from the opportunities of the new developing economy. Opposing factions mostly divided themselves along racial lines resulting in what Martínez describes as "intensified racial animosities that had existed since the U.S. invasion of the area in 1846."[136] The Salt Wars demonstrated that both sides were willing to use force to impose their will, and many Mexicans were left with the distinct impression that social relations had become even more racialized.

When the Revolution broke out with the first major battle at Ciudad Juárez in 1911, the contemptuous rendering of Mexicans as a "problem" was securely entrenched in the minds of many El Pasoans. The presence of federal and state law enforcement and military officials in El Paso positioned the Mexicans as the "subject" other. The Mexican Revolution further complicated matters as revolutionary thought influenced some local residents to see the conflict as a fight against entrenched racialized ideas.

¡Viva La Revolución! El Paso's place in the Mexican Revolution

El Paso's role in the Mexican Revolution was immediate. Many of the revolutionary leaders staged their battles and organizing initiatives in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. Because El Paso had become a premier site for Mexican revolutionaries and radical political activity had increased in the American border city, U.S. and Texas officials became concerned with border security. This concern was palpable even since

[136] Ibid, p. 85.

the election of Governor Oscar Colquitt in January 1911.[137] Ranch raids and arms deals originating in Mexico and the related exiled and civil rights politics in El Paso also prompted U.S. officials to begin paying more attention to the border region. This attention focused on El Paso because of its position as one of the most active points of economic and political exchange along the border.[138]

In 1912, Governor Colquitt revitalized the Texas Rangers to police the border and investigate any criminal activity that would compromise the neutrality act.[139] The United States Bureau of Investigation also began to stake its roots at this time. The agency sent numerous undercover agents to border points like El Paso disguised as photographers, newspaper men, trading post operators, and civilian cavalry scouts.[140] According to Charles Harris and Louis Sadler, their secret activities surfaced in El Paso during the Pascual Orozco rebellion of 1912 in Ciudad Juarez. The atmosphere of secrecy and intrigue was suggestive of West Berlin during the Cold War, with its share of agents, double and triple agents, mercenaries, gunrunners, and propagandists. A secret war was raging in El Paso and subversive activity pitted Mexican factions, United States citizens, and governmental agencies against each other.[141]

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[137] Don M. Coerver and Linda B Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution: A Study in State and National Border Policy, 1910-1920* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1984), p. 20.
[138] For more information on exiled politics and Mexican civil right activity, see: William H. Beezley, *Insurgent Governor: Abraham González and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973); Ira Jefferson Bush, *Gringo Doctor* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1939); Peter Calvert, *The Mexican Revolution: 1910-1914: The Diplomacy of Anglo-American Conflict* (Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1968).
[139] Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Border and the Revolution: Clandestine Activities of the Mexican Revolution: 1910-1920* (Silver City, NM: High-Lonesome Books, 1988), p. 62.
[140] Wilfred Dudley Smithers, "The Semi-Military Peace Officers," undated manuscipt, Smithers (W.D.) Collection, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, p. 1
[141] Harris III and Sadler, *The Border and the Revolution*, p. 55.

The Orozco rebellion began when followers of Pascual Orozco, a popular revolutionary exile operating in El Paso, began to use the border city as a port for arms and munitions trade. President Howard Taft, however, had become weary of conspiratorial activity along the border and imposed an arms embargo on munitions shipments to Mexico, although he did not apply it to the revolutionary faction that he favored, the one led by the moderate Constitutionalist Francisco Madero.[142] Despite the embargo, the Orozquistas were determined to ship arms for their cause in Mexico. Law enforcement officials were equally determined to intercept the arms shipments and to arrest the revolutionaries. This resulted in a number of arrests as well as violent confrontations.

As arms deals and violence increased along the border, the Bureau of Investigation and the Mexican secret service cooperated fully, suggesting that intergovernmental relations also followed a quieter form of border diplomacy. The primary objective of the bureau was to enforce American neutrality laws while utilizing the various federal and state institutions, including the U.S. Army, Customs Service, and the Texas Rangers. Mexico's Secret Service was interested in denying revolutionary groups the use the U.S. side of the border to foment revolutionary activity by securing arms and recruiting new recruits for their causes against the established government. Usually, the Mexican Secret Service conducted investigations on revolutionary groups operating in the United States and U.S. authorities made the necessary arrests. This cooperation led to the arrest and death, under suspicious circumstances, of Orozco.

[142] Ibid.

However, beneath the façade of cooperation among federal agencies on both sides of the river inherent mistrust and growing animosity persisted. Orozco's death at the hands of ranchmen, local law enforcement officials, the U.S. Army, and the Texas Rangers near Sierra Blanca, Texas prompted serious protest and outcry in San Antonio and El Paso.[143] Anglo residents in West Texas feared reprisals from the local Mexican community and requested Rangers for protection. In addition, the Carranza revolutionary faction requested the American government to investigate into the killings. Orozco's death and the anxious response by Anglo residents revealed that tensions in the area were intensifying. As important as the activities of arms smuggling and revolutionary plots were, they took a back seat to events that took place in 1915.

The closing months of 1915 witnessed escalated racial tensions in the relations between Mexico and the United States. On October 19, 1915, Villa's political rival, Venustiano Carranza emerged as the political leader of Mexico when the Wilson administration extended him *de facto* recognition and special military concessions. Villa saw these actions by the United States as a betrayal and a clear violation of neutrality laws. His anti-American rhetoric forced state and federal governments to reexamine security concerns along the border. Villa's antipathy is well documented in various academic and popular works, however, but few historians have measured the significance of these international on local social relations in places like El Paso.[144]

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[143] Coerver and Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution*, p. 116.

[144] For more on Villa's anti-American rhetoric, see: Haldeen Braddy, "Pancho Villa at Columbus: The Raid of 1916 Revisited," *Southwestern Studies*, Monograph No. 9, Vol. III, No. 1 (El Paso: Texas Western College Press, Spring 1965); John F. Chalkley, *Zach Lamar Cobb: El Paso Collector of Customs and Intelligence During the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1918* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1998); Coerver and Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution*

On October 26, 1915, Villa assembled the inhabitants of Colonia Morelos, Sonora and delivered one of his most notable public speeches. His speech was heavily anti-American, especially when he stated that he would, "rescue the settlers from the tyranny of the North American Mormons, who exploit, vilify, and assassinate the Mexicans in the region."[145] His willingness to include the "tyranny" of the Mormons is a strong indication that his growing hatred toward Americans was not limited to the Wilson administration.

Relations between Villa and Carranza continued to deteriorate at the same time that Villa was beginning to criticize the United States. General John Pershing, who had taken command of Fort Bliss, intervened by inviting Carranza's chief general, Alvaro Obregón, and Villa for conversations in El Paso. The attempt to reconcile the opposing revolutionary camps may have sought to pacify matters on the border. The results, however, were different. Villa became the man of the hour among the Mexicans in the city. One El Paso resident recalls Villa in exciting terms:

> Pasó por la Calle de El Paso cuando vino con el General Pershing..¿Comó no lo voy a recorder, joven? Pero ni el golpe (the young girl sustained a minor injury falling down some stairs) sentí por llegar hasta ver a Pancho Villa…(He came through El Paso Street with General Pershing..How could I forget, young man? Not even my injury was going to keep me from seeing Pancho Villa.)[146]

The Mexican community clearly welcomed him into the city.[147] This alarmed members of the Anglo community.

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[145] Harris III and Sadler, *The Border and the Revolution*, p. 103.
[146] (Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own) Hortencia Villegas, interview by Oscar J. Martínez, February 17, 1976, interview 235, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.
[147] Timmons, *El Paso*, p. 219.

Illustration 1: *Left to right*: General Alvaro Obregón, Pancho Villa, General John Pershing. *Courtesy of ElPaso.org.*

Since Villa's glorious return to El Paso, a series of events fueled the racial tension between Anglos and Mexicans, especially in Texas where Mexicans had responded to the call to arms in the 1915 *Plan de San Diego*.[148] Tensions escalated as fear of a Huerta uprising began to creep into El Paso's social circles, as well as newspapers began floating rumors of Villa's plan to attack El Paso. The *San Antonio Express*, for example, reported the following incendiary story:

> General Manuel F. Medinavieta, former chief of staff of General [Pancho] Villa, now a prisoner in [El Paso]…related that Villa had planned an attack on Juárez and later upon El Paso…He intended a surprise attack to capture Juárez and then open fire on El Paso.[149]

[148] Investigation of Mexican Affairs, *Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations on S. Res. 106*, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, December 6, 1919, pp. 810-811.
[149] "Villa Planned to Attack El Paso," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.

The attack never materialized, however, Anglos continued to think that it would and harbored resentments against the local Mexicans who had expressed support and admiration for the revolutionary figure.

Anglo farmers and ranchers were especially resentful against Mexicans because of the raids that had been occurring for some time. Mexicans, on the other hand, often saw the raids as acts of self-defense and retribution justified by their experience of racial discrimination and violence. Anglo residents in the city, on the other hand, became increasingly concerned over the poverty and associated health problems that Mexicans immigrants purportedly introduced to their area. With the rise of immigration and increasing political activity led by Mexican exiles, tensions grew considerably and the confrontations that ensued reflected and reinforced serious problems in intergovernmental relations.

¡No Más! Defiance of Authority and Angry Mobs in 1916

The riot began when a group of sixteen American engineers set out by train from Chihuahua City for the Cusi Mining Company near Santa Ysabel, Chihuahua. The Americans were entering "hostile" territory, yet the Governor of Chihuahua gave them assurance of safe passage. Near Santa Ysabel, a band of Villistas stopped the train, forced the Americans off and shot them dead. The revolutionaries next stripped the bodies and mutilated them.[150] Killing of Americans was not a common occurrence; however, the incident underscored the failure of the Chihuahua government to guarantee

[150] Haldeen Braddy, *Pancho Villa at Columbus: The Raid of 1916 Revisited* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1965, p. 26.

Americans safe passage. The involvement of Villista forces also aggravated the situation. Villa's anti-American rhetoric and his public denunciation of President Wilson had already made Villa a *persona non grata*, especially among the Anglo residents of El Paso.

Racial tension reached its boiling point on January 13, 1916 when the cadavers were displayed in El Paso. The news of the massacre spread, and a small group of Anglo residents from El Paso started to make their way towards Chihuahuita, clearly intending to exact revenge on local Mexicans. The approximately fifty rioters essentially went on a rampage, beating up any Mexican that they encountered on the streets, businesses, and even homes.[151] According to a newspaper report, the local police had to rescue one Mexican from a mob intent on killing him.[152] The angry mob was not alone as mining and cattle men organized a secret meeting to gather a punitive expedition into Mexico to capture the persons who killed the American engineers.

Illustration 2: West side view of South El Paso Street (Chihuahuita). *Courtesy of ElPaso.org*.

[151] "Slain Americans Buried; El Paso is City of Funerals," *San Antonio Express*, January 15, 1916.
[152] "Mexicans Chased Across the Border," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.

According to Hortencia Villegas, an eyewitness and survivor of the siege, a large group of men began to make their way towards the movie theatre, *El Teatro Alcazar*, on El Paso Street.[153] The group started a squabble with some Mexicans. The confrontation turned into a full-fledged assault when the Anglos began to beat up anyone they saw. The riot turned into a shadow of a war that involved two primary characters--Anglos and Mexicans. Anglos invaded the "foreign territory" of Mexican "Chihuahuita" in retaliation for the death of their comrades in Mexico. Women, children, and the elderly were not excluded from the terror of the vigilante group:

> …me acuerdo que a toda la gente dándoles golpes, a viejitos y a jóvenes y a todos. (I remember everyone receiving blows, the elderly and young people, everyone).[154]

The Anglo rioters, however, met resistance.

Once the word of the riot spread throughout the neighboring "barrios," groups from "El Segundo Barrio" began to show up with sticks, bats, pipes and anything else they could get to defend themselves.[155] According to Villegas, residents of Ciudad Juárez, including soldiers, joined their Mexican brethren from El Paso;

> no le digo que se vino toda la mexicanada, y luego los de Juárez. Creo que eran todos los soldados de allá de Juárez, porque los tranvías empezaron a pasar con gente que se fue pa' Juárez y avisaron allá como andaba aquí el mitote…
>
> [I tell you that all the Mexicans came and then from Juárez. I believe they were the soldiers that were stationed there in Juárez because the trolleys

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153 Villegas, interview, February 17, 1976.
154 Ibid.
155 El Paso's "Segundo Barrio" (Second Ward) was primarily inhabited by Mexicans and Mexican Americans. The area stretches East from the downtown area and along the Rio Grande.

> began to take people to Juárez to tell everyone there of the ruckus that was going on…][156]

At the climax of the rioting, Pershing ordered the Sixteenth Infantry to take charge of the downtown area as police officers had lost control of the crowds. Lines of troops four abreast bulldozed through the streets and established sentries on the corners and in the middle of the plaza. American soldiers conducted a search for weapons and Villa sympathizers in Chihuahuita after midnight. Residents were prohibited from walking the streets without a permit signed by the provost marshal.[157] Despite the military occupation, soldiers and Mexicans continued to brawl in the streets.[158]

After the riot, General Pershing and the El Paso Police Department sent their respective units on a "Clean Up" mission of the Mexican quarter to avert further race rioting in the city. About fifty soldiers and as many police officers went "looking for Mexicans" and rounding up suspected Villa associates during their "clean up" of the Chihuahuita streets.[159] As the "clean up" efforts were coming to an end and soldiers and police officers spread out over the bustling downtown area, General Pershing declared martial law. Despite this drastic military measure, Anglo rioters insisted on frequenting saloons and other public establishments. Some Mexicans also congregated in some public places and police officers ordered them to leave because of "concern for their

[156] Villegas, interview, February 17, 1976.
[157] "Carranza Orders Assassins Captured Dead or Alive," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.
[158] "Mexicans Chased Across Border," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.
[159] "Americans Fighting Mexicans in El Paso," *New York Times*, January 14, 1916.

safety."[160] Fights nevertheless broke out between American soldiers and Mexican residents.[161]

An article in the otherwise progressive *Labor Advocate* revealed the smoldering outrage among Anglos who increasingly saw the conflict in nationalistic terms. The writer called on "Americans" to defend their country.[162] He suggested that defending the country meant revenge for the murder of American engineers and other foreigners in Mexico. The exaggerated nationalism that was used to give meaning to the attack on Chihuahuita deepened a racial line of division as real as the international border that separated Mexico from the United States.

General Pershing reinforced the developing racial divisions by instituting martial law and enforcing a policy of containment on Mexican neighborhoods. One of General Pershing more creative enforcement practices were "Dead Lines," or physical demarcations that set aside the Mexican neighborhoods from the rest of the population. Mexicans were not allowed to come out of the "Chihuahuita" district and Americans were not permitted to enter.[163] Matters worsened when General Pershing closed the international bridge, thus extending the "Dead Line" to the line separating the United States from Mexico. With this order, American residents were prohibited from crossing into Ciudad Juárez and Mexicans were prohibited from crossing into El Paso.[164]

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[160] "Carranza Orders Assassins Captured Dead or Alive," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.
[161] "Mexicans Chased Across Border," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.
[162] *Labor Advocate*, January 14, 1916, El Paso, Texas. Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.
[163] "Troops Ready to Prevent Trouble," *San Antonio Express*, January 15, 1916.
[164] "Slain Americans Buried in El Paso," *San Antonio Express*, January 15, 1916.

The intent was to quell the disturbance, but it reinforced the division with a dead line that was reminiscent of the imaginary point beyond which prisoners during the Civil War could not go lest they be shot. In the case of Chihuahuita, Mexicans who violated the dead line were met with legal and physical repercussions. Many residents, including Hortencia Villegas, were too afraid to cross the line for fear of getting assaulted, "Yo pa' la Plaza no me voy, no me vayan a golpear" (I don't go to the Plaza; they may hurt me).[165] In one case, a Mexican left a bar after the curfew set by the "Dead Line" and was severely beaten by soldiers.[166]

The sequestering of Mexicans in Chuihuahuita suggested that they were responsible for the uprising and required detention. Their containment also made it possible for the Army to continue searching Mexican homes in search of armed "Villa sympathizers." Subsequent declarations by officials that they had "cleaned up El Paso Street" indicated that Mexicans in "Chihuahuita" had been liable for the riot and that they represented a threat to social order in El Paso.[167] Such repressive measures further alienated the Mexican population and affirmed popular anti-Mexican feelings among the rest of the El Paso population.

The conflict in El Paso was not confined to the segregated Mexican neighborhood. The massacre of the American engineers also ignited a bitter campaign and petition to President Woodrow Wilson for the immediate removal of the United

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[165] Villegas, interview, February 17, 1976.
[166] Mauricio Cordero, interview by Oscar J. Martínez, February 15, 1874, interview 250, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.

[167] "Mexicans Chased Across Border," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.

States Consul T. D. Edwards, stationed in Juarez, for his alleged indifference to American interests in Mexico. As a mob gathered outside his hotel in El Paso, they claimed that representatives like him were to blame for the massacre.[168] As he left a hotel in the early morning of the thirteenth of January, a hostile crowd greeted him with shouts and jeers. Some of the shouts included, "Villa's consul, not ours," and "Go back to Juarez with the Mexicans, where you belong; don't come over here. Go find Villa, the murderer; you're his consul, not an American representative."[169]

The Mexican Revolution had now spilled over into the lives of common citizens and had ignited deep-seated resentment and distrust against Mexicans in El Paso. Also, law enforcement officials, especially military personnel stationed in the area, assumed a key role in deepening the racial divide, both in El Paso and across the international border. They may have been primarily interested in containing the conflict and "cleaning up" El Paso of Villa "sympathizers" and revolutionaries. They also reinforced anti-Mexican feelings and their positions as the final arbiters in cases involving racial conflict. Moreover, they enforced the racial custom of separating the races, ostensibly for the protection of the Mexicans who suffered an injustice during the riot.

The metaphor of the "deadline" was especially important in revealing the extent to which authorities were able to segregate El Paso. They had the consent of the dominant Anglo population to dictate a line beyond which Mexicans could not travel. The separation of Mexicans from the rest of El Paso, the prohibition of passage across the

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[168] "Citizens Demand Consul's Recall," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.

[169] "Seek Consul's Removal," *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1916.

border, and the establishment of martial law with the accompanying "dead lines" reinforced the idea that Mexicans were a defeated minority. Moreover, their isolation and vilification identified them as an "enemy other." The race riot in El Paso is one of the most dramatic expressions of anti-Mexican feelings that were also directed against Mexicans from Ciudad Juárez. It also demonstrated how law enforcement officials, especially members of the U.S. military, influenced racial thinking despite their seemingly disinterested role in handling the riot.

El Paso's experience with a race riot was accompanied by other events that underscored the complex nature of life in El Paso as it also witnessed the more traditional and cooperative type of diplomatic relations as one of the most important border cities in the United States. Former President Victoriano Huerta, the successor to Madero who had been deposed and exiled to El Paso, passed away the very day the bodies were brought to El Paso. His family members laid him in state at his residence in El Paso anticipating a return to Mexico. However, because of the racial and social tension surrounding El Paso, his body was temporarily placed in a vault and later interned at Concordia Cemetery in El Paso. Mexican Army officials, family members and Mayor Tom Lea escorted the casket.[170] Although Huerta had few supporters in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, the services demonstrated that diplomatic protocol could still provide a measure of normalcy to intergovernmental relations despite the local and international crisis associated with the riot. The ritual of recognition and respect accorded a former Mexican president also encouraged the nationalistic sensibilities of the Mexican residents of El Paso and

[170] Huerta lived in his daughter's El Paso home at the same time of his death. Leon Metz, *Border: The U.S.-Mexico Line* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1989), p. 219.

reinforced the popular view that they were prone to look to the south for political identification and encouragement.

The Invasion of Columbus, New Mexico and racialized justice

Huerta's funeral services and martial law in El Paso may have stilled the political waters somewhat, but the Revolution still ran deep and its current continued to carry the fortunes of many in its wake. This was especially evident in Villa, still smarting from Wilson's recognition of Carranza and the U.S.'s arms embargo that was undermining his revolutionary cause. Villa, in other words, continued to carry out his anti-American rhetoric months after the El Paso riot. His eventual attack on nearby Columbus, New Mexico, demonstrated that the Revolution was still spilling over into the United States and influencing both intergovernmental relations and race relations in places like El Paso.

U.S. officials had continued to monitor Villa's whereabouts in 1916. A number of military and civilian officials as well as run of the mill Anglo residents from El Paso aided in the intelligence gathering of Villa near the international boundary. Zachary Lamar Cobb, the city's Collector of Customs and Intelligence during the Mexican Revolution, expressed a popular local concern over the instability in Mexico to Secretary of State Robert Lansing:

> As seen from here, the Carranza authorities have lost their opportunity to have established the trend toward improvement. The trend has set in against their success. As seen from here, I am reconciled to the expectation that conditions in the state of Chihuahua and along the border will grow worse.[171]

[171] Chalkley, *Zach Lamar Cobb*, p. 56.

Cobb also warned of possible German influence in Carranza's administration, a point that must have piqued the interest of the security conscious Wilson. He also sounded the first alarm of a possible invasion by Villa or his sympathizers on American soil.[172]

Villa's continued influence in Ciudad Juárez explained the U.S.'s interest in El Paso and the intelligence reports that came from the border city. Villa had maintained military control over Juárez at least until late December 1915. Cobb maintained that his influence was still evident. He reported, for example, that Villa's family continued to live in El Paso. In January 1916, Cobb relayed a message from Carranza authorities indicating that Villa would be crossing "to U.S. somewhere in Columbus, New Mexico district."[173] Cobb eventually was able to confirm Villa's movement towards Columbus, New Mexico:

> Villa left Pacheco Point, near Madera Wednesday [March 1] with three hundred men headed towards Columbus, New Mexico. Hs is reported west of Casasgrandes [*sic*] today. There is reason to believe he intends to cross to United States and hopes to proceed to Washington. Please consider this possibility and the necessity of instructions to us on the border.[174]

On March 8, 1916, Villa and five hundred men arrived just outside of Columbus to a place called Bocagrande. They set up camp and began to organize their attack the following morning. Villa had two American "prisoners," one was a cook and the other was a "corporal." As Villa approached the camp, he reportedly shot them and had them

[172] Ibid, pp. 59-60.
[173] Ibid, p. 63.
[174] Ibid, pp. 64-65.

hung from a nearby tree.[175] Villa had just set the example for all of his men. After the execution, he made his way towards Columbus. Along the way, in the ranches "El Chale," "Rancho Verde," and others just outside of Columbus, Villa recruited an unknown number of local Mexicans.[176] Villa attacked Columbus on the morning of March 9, 1916. Columbus claimed four hundred residents and an untold number of soldiers of the thirteen cavalry.[177]

Illustration 3: View of Columbus, New Mexico. *Courtesy of the Otis A. Aultman Collection, El Paso Public Library*

Shots and battle cries rang out, "Viva Villa!" and "Muerte a los gringos! (Death to Gringos)" Private Fred Griffin, the sentinel on post number three at Regimental Headquarters, challenged the rebels and was mortally wounded. Villistas made a strong push forward setting ablaze Ravel's Commercial Hotel. Officers were absent and the soldiers had to rip down the locks to the guardhouse to get to their weapons. Chaos spread like wildfire. Civilians and some soldiers made a run for the desert to escape the

[175] Epitacio Armendaríz, interview by Virgilio H. Sánchez, 1980, *Historia Laboral Fronteriza*, interview 551, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.
[176] James W. Hurst, *Villista Prisoners of 1916-1917* (Las Cruces: Yucca Tree Press, 2000), p. 19.

[177] Haldeen Braddy, *Pancho Villa at Columbus: The Raid of 1916* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1965), p. 32.

attack. The battle ended fairly quickly. By day break the Villistas started to make their retreat when they realized that a machine gun unit cut off their access. This proved to be the deciding factor in ending the raid.[178] The raiders were finally outnumbered and outgunned when several of the officers and units began to organize.[179]

The aftermath of the battle closely resembles the violence that occurred in El Paso after the riot just three months prior. When the smoke cleared and the clean up efforts began, people who had fled to Deming, New Mexico, El Paso, and Asunción, Chihuahua, made their way back to Columbus. Among them was a Mexican from El Paso, who was hoping to open a barber shop in Columbus. Late that night, on March 9, when their train arrived a group of Americans assaulted the Mexican and killed them. According to an interview with an observer:

> (Armendáriz) Y hubo otros Mexicanos, eran tres, tres Mexicanos, que llegaron en la noche, también por ahi de Deming. Y los agarraron, y luego … Les soltaron los balazos y dos cayeron…los mataron. (And there were Mexicans, three, three of them that came that night from Deming. And [the Americans] got them and then shot them and two of them fell…they killed them.)
>
> (Sánchez): *¿Los Americanos?* (The Americans?)
>
> (Armendáriz): Los Americanos los afusilaron. (The Americans executed them)
>
> (Sánchez): *Y esos muchachos nomás venían, no tenían nada que ver con el ataque ni nada.* (And those men just arrived, they didn't have anything to do with the attack or anything.)

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[178] Ibid, p. 18.

[179] For more information on the Columbus raid, see: Braddy, *Pancho Villa at Columbus*, Frederich Katz, *Pancho Villa y el ataque a Columbus, Nuevo México* (Chihuahua, México: Sociedad Chihuahuense de Estudios Históricos, 1979); Eileen Welsome, *The General and The Jaguar: Pershing's Hunt for Pancho Villa: A True Story of Revolution and Revenge* (New York: Little Brown & Co., 2006).

> (Armendáriz): No, nada nada. Si nomás venían de por ahi de otros pueblos. (No nothing. They just came from other towns)[180]

More Mexicans, some arriving from Asunción and Janos, Chihuahua, encountered the same fate that night. After the Columbus attack, a vigilante group made up of Anglos took justice into their own hands, just like in El Paso, and began to assault any Mexican they saw. It did not matter if the Mexicans were associated with Villa or not. Little is known about the violence after the attack, but it was clear that it was used to justify the racially inspired reprisals and the continued separation of the people of Columbus and other towns and cities on racial grounds.

Conclusion

The El Paso riot uncovered underlying anti-Mexican feelings and reinforced a negative view of Mexicans. It also provided local authorities the opportunity to reinforce their positions as the final mediators in cases involving racialized social conflict. Also, the episode legitimized their role in enforcing the racial custom of separating the races, ostensibly for the protection of the Mexicans who suffered a clear injustice during the 1916 riot. The "deadline" was especially important in revealing the extent to which authorities were able to segregate El Paso. They had the consent of the dominant Anglo population to dictate a line of separation that could be militarily enforced. The separation of Mexicans and Anglos and the establishment of martial law and "dead lines" reinforced the idea that Mexicans were a defeated minority. Moreover, their isolation and vilification that stemmed from the massacre and the riot identified them as an "enemy other."

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[180] Armendaríz, interview, October 14, 1979.

The 1916 riot deepened racial divisions between Mexicans and Anglos in El Paso and colored relations between Americans and Mexicans in the border region. A less obvious consequence is that authorities assumed great importance in defining these divisions and in reinforcing their role as the final arbiters in social conflicts.

The violent campaign against everything Mexican made it possible for authorities, such as General Pershing, the U.S. Army, and angry mobs to assume a central role in defining social relations in racialized terms. The conflicts at El Paso and nearby Columbus demonstrate that the Mexican Revolution figured prominently in the history of Mexico-U.S. relations and in local affairs, especially in the way that it shaped social relations along the border. Military officials were clear about the importance of the Revolution in intergovernmental relations as well in local social relations. Their actions, especially during the El Paso riot, reinforced local racial antipathies and divisions. Relations between Mexicans and Anglos, already defined in racial terms, became even more problematic as Anglos expressed their anxieties over their perceived threat of the Revolution and Mexicans expressed their mixed political allegiances and cultural attachments in an increasingly inhospitable environment.

Chapter 4

The National Guard, Vigilantism, the Mexican, and War

"…I've done my fill of the border,/ Of greasers and border men,/I've done my bit and I stand to quit/And never take on again,/ But I seem to know, when the bugles blow/ And I hear the reveille,/ That my blood

will heat and my pulses beat/ No matter where I may be./ And I'll yearn to go—with a burning yearn/ That only the soldier feels…"—Unknown Author[181]

Introduction

After Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus, the borderlands of West Texas, Southern New Mexico, and Northern Mexico burst into conflict. Civilians, servicemen, and politicians had fully engaged the problems on the border, waged punitive measures against Mexico, and managed the intense racial tensions that emerged. Agencies that included the National Guard, the Texas Rangers, and local police had established order at the same time that they reinforced the idea of the Mexican as the "enemy." Also, the massive military buildup on the border, led by the National Guard, contributed to the separation of the neighboring regions that had long been interdependent. Lastly, the infamous "Deadline" imposed on El Paso continued to divide people a year after the race riot.[182]

The introduction of the numerous National Guardsmen to the border in 1916, especially to El Paso, established yet another layer to the authority structure already in place and complicated social relations even more. The National Guard, or state militias, had long engaged the western frontier. This was evident soon after the Mexican War of 1846-48 when the border became a point of diplomatic and economic interest.[183] The

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[181] Unknown author, "I've Done My Bit on the Border," Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.

[182] "Want S. El Paso Street Opened; Merchants Complain Army 'Dead Line' Works Great Injustice on Them," *El Paso Herald*, June 21, 1917.

[183] For more on the Mexican War and the Treaty of Guadalupe, see: Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; A Legacy of Conflict* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Paul Foos, *A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict During the Mexican-American War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Richard B. Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997).

interest continued during the late nineteenth century when railroads connected the southwestern states to the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Mexico City. Conflict on the border also encouraged official interest. Mexicans residing in the annexed territories, for instance, resisted the takeover and often came into conflict with Anglo settlers. Anglos, on the other hand, often reacted with violence to defend themselves as well as to initiate land-grabbing schemes on Mexican land owners. Also, federal and state authorities who sought to resolve the conflict often reinforced it with their own violent methods as well as with their partisan ways.[184]

In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate that the "border trouble days," meaning the border conflict stemming from the Mexican Revolution, required border institutions to move beyond local vigilance and punitive measures and request that federal institutions assume greater responsibility in securing the border.[185] The federal response to the growing security concerns assumed international importance and reinforced a popular view of the Mexicans as the "enemy." I suggest that border institutions evolved from their localized and state settings into more federalized and concentrated power that extended beyond assuring border security to maintaining social order. As the U.S.-Mexico border witnessed pacification, two distinct and racially divided communities emerged. The U.S. military assumed a major responsibility in this process as its relationship with local Mexicans worsened along the international boundary. Moreover, the intense militarization of the border by the National Guard complicated

[184] Timothy Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1996), p. 6.
[185] Smithers, a soldier and special observer who settled in the El Paso area after military service, called the years from 1916 to the early thirties as the "border trouble days." Wilfred Dudley Smithers, "Too Rough

intergovernmental relations as Mexico came to see the buildup as a direct threat to its national security.

President Woodrow Wilson's recognition of Venustiano Carranza's Constitutionalist government in December 1915 led to a series of events that underscored the international significance of border conflicts. Wilson took this important action to gain Carranza's help in pacifying the border. Pancho Villa, however, saw the act as a betrayal by Wilson and a violation of the United States' promised neutrality on the Mexican Revolution. The U.S.'s new alignment with Carranza's administration encouraged Villa to commence a series of violent acts that targeted American citizens and property.

His subsequent attack on Columbus turned an intergovernmental initiative that sought greater security along the border into another source of conflict. Predictably, Secretary of War Newton Baker responded to Villa by federalizing the state militias into the National Guard under the National Defense Act of 1916 to enforce the United States' neutrality policy and border security. While the U.S. Army marched into Mexico in pursuit of Villa, the newly organized National Guard under the direct command of the President and U.S. Army assumed the responsibility of patrolling the border, protecting American property owners from raids, and disbanding Mexican revolutionary *juntas* that were organizing on U.S. soil.

<u>The National Guard on the U.S.-Mexico Border</u>

For Comfort—The Mexico Border," undated, unpublished essay, W.D. Smithers Collection, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

The mobilization of the National Guard and the militarization of the border in 1916 followed a long history of securing the area and building institutions that included state and local law enforcement bodies. State militias, for example, had operated in the frontier since their initial engagements with Native Americans during the infamous "Indian Wars" of 1865-1890.[186] Frontier militias were mostly a state or private affair. Since the War of 1812, state militias had only been called into federal service on two occasions, during the Civil War and the Spanish-American War.

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the Texas state militia held the principle responsibility of resisting Indian incursions along the Texas-Mexico boundary. After the Texas war for independence in 1836, problems arose in the state's most remote settlements, such as El Paso, that included ranch raids by alleged Indian bandits from both Mexico and the United States. The state made a variety of attempts to organize mobile law enforcement groups to protect the isolated settlements throughout much of the later half of the nineteenth century. On June 24, 1870, the Texas legislature passed a militia bill which provided for the organization and drilling of the state militia. The unit was divided into two classes: the State Guard, which was composed of volunteer companies and the Reserve Militia, which included all males subject to military duty not

[186] The 1890 Battle of Wounded Knee was the last Indian engagement with federal troops. After the battle the U.S. Army was dispersed more evenly across the country and with more diversified objectives. For more information on military posts and operations during the "Indian Wars," see: Army Historical Series, "American Military History," Center of Military History, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C., 1989; Mildred P. Mayhall, *Indian Wars of Texas* (Waco: Texian Press, 1965); Michael Nunnally, *American Indian Wars: A Chronology of Confrontations Between Native Peoples and Settlers and the United States Military, 1500s-1901* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007).

enrolled in volunteer companies. In El Paso County, over four hundred men enrolled in the Reserve Militia.[187]

The state militia underwent changes in the 1870s and 1880s that were inspired by a variety of political and social issues, including Indian incursions, uprisings, and the Democratic Party takeover of Texas politics. Indian incursions prompted the Texas State Legislature to pass a law in 1874 that called on the state militia to provide for frontier protection. The El Paso County Frontiersmen Minute Company under the command of Lieutenant Telesforo Montes and consisting of twenty-four men was thus mustered into service between May 27, 1874 and November 27, 1875.[188] Montes reported that Indians were continuing to cause problems and the citizens of El Paso needed protection. Texas governor, Richard Coke, however, cut the militia budget in response to reduced state appropriations.[189] The problems on the border increased and Adjutant General William Steele subsequently reorganized the various volunteer companies throughout the state in 1878 into larger divisions.

In 1879, the Texas state legislature followed by passing a militia act that organized the Volunteer guards into uniformed companies that answered directly to the governor, the "commander-in-chief" of the state militia. The governor also had the power to mobilize the unit to "suppress insurrections, repel invasions and protect the frontier from hostile Indians and other predatory bands."[190] Most of the companies, however,

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[187] Adjutant General of Texas, "General's Report, June 1870-December 1870," pp. 6-33, Texas State Archives and Library Commission, Austin, Texas.
[188] Emily Tessier Zillich, "History of the National Guard in El Paso," master's thesis, Texas Western College (University of Texas at El Paso), 1958, p. 3.
[189] Allan R. Purcell, "The History of the Texas Militia, 1835-1903," dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1981, p. 259.
[190] Ibid, p. 263.

received critical logistical material and support from local officials and acted somewhat independent of state officials, especially in remote areas like El Paso. Ysleta formed its Volunteer Guard and El Paso formed Company "K" (also known as the "El Paso Rifles") in 1879 and 1882, respectively.[191]

Adjutant General reports during the latter part of the nineteenth century show that Texas militia units assisted local and regional authorities on numerous occasions. County sheriffs and city mayors typically activated local militia without state approval.[192] State support for the militia in fact waned during the 1880s and its work was overshadowed by the Texas Rangers and U.S. Army.

The "Indian Wars," the major justification for the militias, came to an end by 1886, and both the federal and state government began to abolish small and desolate army posts and state police forces, such as the Texas Rangers' Frontier Batallion. Fort Bliss nearly fell victim to the new reorganization but was spared by local financial and political support that felt an army post along the border was necessary for protection against raids and insurrections.[193] El Paso's militia underwent a series of reorganizations and ultimately disbanded as Fort Bliss siphoned much of the local and federal support for border security.[194] According to Adjutant General Wilburn King, it was increasingly difficult to retain sufficient number of young men in the militia despite its need in El

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[191] Zillich, "History of the National Guard in El Paso," pp. 5-6.
[192] "Texas National Guard," *Texas State Handbook Online*, http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/TT/qnt2.html (accessed July 3, 2007).
[193] Many of El Paso's business leaders collected $7,000 for improved facilities at Fort Bliss and Congress paid additional funds to purchase land and facilities in El Paso. The financial and political support for Fort Bliss kept it from merging with a Fort Seldon just a few miles north of Las Cruces, New Mexico. Leon Metz, *Desert Army: Fort Bliss on the Texas Border* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1988), p. 83.
[194] "Fort Bliss," *Texas State Handbook Online*, http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/FF/qbf3.html (accessed July 3, 2007)

Paso.[195] The militia, however, experienced a revival as a result of the Spanish-American War and federal appropriations. President McKinley federalized the state militias at this time. Several Texas companies served, although El Paso was not represented in the campaign because the militia did not exist in the border city at the time.[196] The U.S. government reorganized the state militias one more time at the turn of the twentieth century. The principle aim was to provide uniformity among all units and ensure that the federal government would have at its disposal the necessary forces. This reorganization federalized the State militias and converted them into the National Guard.

Following the Spanish-American War, Congress passed the Dick Act of 1903, which increased appropriations for the state militias and provided for federal compensation when they operated in concert with the Regular Army.[197] The main objective of the national militia law was to once again organize the various state militias into one uniform entity and to make it available for the federal government's call to duty. A fully organized and federally funded state militia was also intended to provide for the common defense of the nation and to make it unnecessary to maintain a standing army.[198]

However, as the Dick Act appropriated money and compensated militiamen when they served in the Regular Army, state militias continued to serve their respective states under local command. It is important to note that state militias were not part of the Regular Army. As stated by the Dick Act, they could be mustered into federal service but

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[195] Ibid, pp. 16-17.
[196] Zillich, "History of the National Guard in El Paso," p. 17.
[197] Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (London: The Macmillian Company, 1969), p. 286.
[198] Adjutant General of Texas, "General's Report, 1903-1904," p. 6, Texas State Archives and Library Commission, Austin, Texas.

remained primarily a state entity. Ultimately, state militias served as an extension of American defenses, especially in areas like the U.S.-Mexico borderlands where the U.S. Army was scarce and overextended. The Dick Act of 1903 essentially designated state militias as an added layer of defense to aid the Regular Army.

Texas ordered its militia troops and detachment of the Texas Volunteer Guard to muster into service as the Texas National Guard in July 1903. El Paso was assigned its first unit of Texas National Guardsmen in November, 1905. The city furnished the armory with amenities such as electricity and water. El Paso mayor Joseph Sweeney served as Captain of Company "K," but resigned his post by 1909. The unit participated in numerous maneuvers and exhibitions throughout the country and received praise from regulars stationed at Fort Bliss. The outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 expanded the Texas National Guard's responsibility. The Mexican Revolution was a major security concern for the United States, especially in West Texas. Ultimately, the National Guard became responsible for responding to raids by Mexicans from Mexico and localities in West Texas, the activities of revolutionary *juntas* on the U.S. side of the border, and dead American citizens at the hands of revolutionary forces in Mexico.[199]

Mexican revolutionaries, including Francisco "Pancho" Villa, the leader of the prominent revolutionary force known as *La División del Norte* that controlled much of northern Mexico, congregated near Ciudad Juárez on the eve of the Revolution. In the first major battle of the Revolution, Francisco Madero, who was to become President of Mexico in 1910, captured the city from the government forces. Subsequent battles in the

[199] Zillich, "History of the National Guard in El Paso," p. 26.

Mexican border region, including Ciudad Juárez and the surrounding area led Texas to mobilize its state militias and supplement the Regular Army soldiers who were already on border duty. According to a local historian named Emily Zillich, a single National Guard unit was headquartered in El Paso.[200] The company consisted of some fourteen officers and twenty-four privates. This was a small contingent considering that it was responsible for much of West Texas and parts of southern New Mexico. Governor Oscar Colquitt went further and rejuvenated the Texas Rangers despite the calls for the dismantling of the force on charges of corruption and unlawful violent actions that they took against South Texas residents. As discussed in previous chapters and elsewhere, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez assumed an important role in the Mexican Revolution. Its strategic locale for importing munitions and recruitment saw increased actions by both the state and federal governments where by 1912 three thousand U.S. troops, including National Guardsmen, were stationed in West Texas.[201]

The call for military protection that often involved the National Guard troops in places like West Texas usually came in response to fears that the Revolution or international incidents associated with it could inspire Mexicans residing in the United States to take up arms.[202] The landing of U.S. Marines in Vera Cruz in 1914, for instance, demonstrated that such incidents could trigger these fears. As U.S.-Mexican relations began to deteriorate after the Vera Cruz occupation by American marines, army troops at

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[200] Ibid, p. 36.
[201] Don M. Coerver and Linda B. Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution: A Study in State and National Border Policy, 1910-1920* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1984), p. 21.

[202] Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan: A Study of Intolerance in a Border City* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1985), p. 20.

Ft. Bliss and the National Guard were ordered to patrol the streets of "Chihuahuita" and place under surveillance a number of suspicious residents. Fearing aggressive or violent anti-American demonstrations, additional troops were placed on high alert and citizens were deputized to enlarge the police force.[203] The hysteria soon passed. Fear, however, continued in some parts of the city. This was especially the case in the city's Anglo community. The thought of revolutionary sympathizers operating in the city, the possibility that they would instigate violence in El Paso and the limited presence of the federal military and National Guard deepened their concerns.[204]

This concern led Governor Oscar Colquitt to further militarize the border. He rushed sixteen companies of the National Guard to supplement the Texas Rangers already on border duty.[205] El Paso residents offered to aid the National Guard and Rangers by submitting requests to organize volunteer guards for war with Mexico and border protection.[206] The Vera Cruz incident and the militarization of the border that it caused were accompanied by other political developments that increased security concerns along the border. For example, continued fighting between Mexican revolutionary forces in 1914 and 1915 led the United States to contribute additional army troops and National Guard to border security.

The constitutionalist forces of the newly recognized President Carranza and Villa's troops fought some of the bloodiest battles Mexico had seen. Some of them took

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[203] Ibid, p. 22.
[204] Ibid, pp. 22-24.
[205] Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), p. 181.

[206] Coerver and Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution*, p. 77.

place near the international boundary. Area newspaper added to security concerns by reporting that thousands of Villa and Carranza officers and soldiers were residing in El Paso and planned on invading the city.[207] In response to the increased violence and fears of invasion, the U.S. military placed one of its largest troop concentrations in the El Paso area.[208] In August 1915, troops were again mobilized in response to a possible uprising among revolutionary minded immigrants residing in "Chihuahuita."[209] Their actions worsened a tense situation. They sowed distrust between Anglos and Mexicans.

Racial animosity and the fear of uprisings did not only exist in West Texas. Social uprisings laced with racial overtones emerged in South Texas around the same time. The discovery of the *Plan de San Diego* in 1915 was especially important. It originated in South Texas and the Plan's call to arms initially called for a race war against Anglos and the establishment of separate republics for Mexicans, Native Americans and Blacks in the territory lost by Mexico during the 1846-48 war. Subsequent documents issued by the revolutionaries who waged a guerilla war mostly in South Texas announced that they were acting against anyone that opposed their irredentist movement, particularly the Texas Rangers.[210]

The raids stemming from the Plan of San Diego forced both state and federal authorities to reevaluate their vigilance over the border region. The small network involving the federal military, the National Guard, Texas Rangers, and local law enforcement groups engaged the raiders with a level of frequency that alarmed federal

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[207] Lay, *War, Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan*, p. 23.
[208] "Troops in City," *El Paso Times*, May 13, 1915.
[209] "Units Patrol Streets," *El Paso Times*, August 30, 1915.
[210] Coerver and Hall, *Texas and the Mexican Revolution*, pp. 85-86.

officials.[211] The raids associated with the Plan of San Diego brought to light the broader context of border security throughout the Texas border region. Headlines of racialized tension in South Texas reached El Paso and, as a result, its residents requested that more federal troops be stationed in the area.[212]

The fear that resulted from events like the Plan of San Diego permeated the border region and prompted many Anglos to resort to vigilantism and indiscriminate assaults on Mexicans.[213] Anglo Ranchers in Hudspeth and El Paso counties armed themselves after popular revolutionary leader Pascual Orozco was killed near Sierra Blanca, Texas, believing that a the local Mexican community would retaliate to his killing.[214] Increased vigilance was clearly required to handle a situation that was spiraling out of control.

The Revolution took a dramatic turn after diplomatic recognition was extended to Carranza's constitutionalist government in late 1915 by Woodrow Wilson. Pancho Villa did not take the political move very well and his relationship with the American government and people soured. A series of anti-American rhetoric and actions were vented by Villa and climaxed in March 1916. Villista soldiers attacked Columbus, New Mexico, a small army post in the southern part of the state, and jolted the nation into an international crisis with Mexico. The Columbus raid created the opportunity for the

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[211] Ibid, p. 89.
[212] Lay, *War, Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan*, p. 24.
[213] Ibid.

[214] Alice Cummings, interview by Richard Estrada, March 1, 1978, transcript, Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

United States government to organize and deploy its army and National Guard to the U.S.-Mexico boundary.

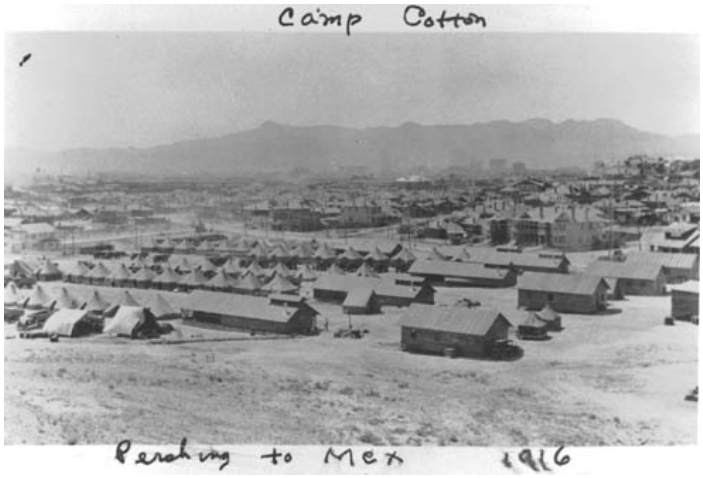

Illustration 4: View of Camp Cotton, Fort Bliss, Texas. *Courtesy of ElPaso.org*

The incessant call for more troops and federal redress by border residents and politicians since the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution had finally reached policy makers in Washington by May 1916. Soon thereafter, heightened security concerns stemming from Villa's attack on Columbus led Secretary of State Newton Baker to call on the governors along the border to mobilize their national guardsmen and make them available to the President for border duty. In one communiqué to Governor Ferguson, Secretary of War Newton Baker underscored the importance of the mobilization:

> I am directed by the President confidentially to advise you that he may be obliged to call out the militia of your state for the defense of the Mexican border and to ask you to take such steps through your Adjutant General as can be taken without publicity to [expedite] immediate action upon such a call if it does become necessary for the President to issue it.[215]

[215] Telegram from Secretary of State, Newton D Baker to Texas Governor, James E. Ferguson. May 1, 1916, Governor James E. Ferguson Papers, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, Texas

Eight days later, the U.S. government issued the order to activate all state militias into a National Guard and assign them to border duty. The U.S. Congress and President Woodrow Wilson had approved the National Defense Act which further expanded the National Guard's role through a unified federal effort and guaranteed that the National Guard would function as the Army's primary reserve force to serve along the border.

The legislation coined the term "National Guard" and granted the President the authority to mobilize it in case of war or national emergency.[216] By August 1916, about 111,954 National Guardsmen from across the country and nearly 11,000 Texas guardsmen were placed along the Texas-Mexico border. West Texas was regarded by the commanding officers as an area desperately needed of reinforcements.[217] The Fourth Texas Infantry and the First Texas Cavalry arrived at Marfa and immediately set up camp outside of town. Their responsibilities were expanded to guard against a possible Mexican invasion, disrupt illegal revolutionary *juntas* that violated neutrality laws, and protect American property from raiding Mexican bandits.

Illustration 5: National Guardsmen at Camp Cotton. *Courtesy of ElPaso.org*

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[216] "Constitutional Charter of the Guard," http://www.arng.mil/history/Constitution/default.asp?ID=14 (accessed September 6, 2006).
[217] Wilfred Dudley Smithers, "Calling Out the National Guard States Militia," undated manuscript, unpublished essay, Smithers (W.D.) Collection, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

The mobilization of the National Guard in May of 1916 was a response to several key events. First, the Wilson administration's recognition of Venustiano Carranza as the *de facto* government in Mexico in December 1915, spurred a series of violent initiatives by Villa against American citizens and property. Moreover, the Carranza government posed a diplomatic problem as the Mexican Revolution continued to spill over into Texas and other parts of the border region and Carranza did not seem interested in cooperating with the United States until Wilson recognized his government.

The government also militarized the border in response to the fear and racial tension that had escalated since the Mexican Revolution, most notably after the discovery of the Plan of San Diego in 1915. For many border residents the Mexican threat was real and capable of erupting into a larger problem. This was made evident when U.S. consular agent George Carothers pointed out that the militarization of the border was necessary due in large part to the suspicion and fear of worsening conditions at places like El Paso. The Santa Ysabel massacre and resulting race riot in the city as noted in the previous chapter demonstrated the volatile potential between Mexicans and Anglos. Following the incident, the debate over national defense along the border became especially marked. Carothers reported an armed Mexican community to Senator Robert Lansing:

> …a large portion [of the] Mexican population of El Paso have arms and ammunition in their houses which will create [a] dangerous situation here…the possibility exists of them starting something [is] serious.[218]

[218] Lay, *War, Revolution and the Ku Klux Klan*, p. 27

National guardsmen and army troops were often assigned to Chihuahuita as a preemptive measure but it became evident to many Anglos in El Paso that the local population represented a potential threat to everyone.

The mass deployment of national guardsmen to the border hit a peak in February 1917 and redirected its efforts and presence elsewhere. Pershing and his men were recalled from Mexico after failing to capture Villa and the United States was preparing for its entry into World War I. Removal of the Guard units from the border began in mid-February and dispersed to various places away from the border. The Texas units were sent to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio and Camp Bowie near Waco.[219] Units from Arizona, New Mexico, and California were stationed at Camp Kearney, California. Many of the units were some of the first to be deployed to France when the United States declared war on Germany April 1917.[220]

World War I left the border to fend for itself. State and local officials assumed a greater responsibility of protecting its citizens along the border. In 1933, the Guard was reorganized as a permanent component of the federal army which could be ordered into active federal service by the President whenever Congress declared a national emergency.[221]

"Confict, Not Peace" The National Guard in West Texas

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[219] Smithers, "Calling Out the National Guard," p. 8.
[220] Ibid, p. 12.

[221] "Constitutional Charter of the Guard," *Army National Guard*, http://www.arng.army.mil/constitution.aspx (accessed on July 3, 2007).

Impending war with Mexico and the high concentration of Mexican residents along the border forced the U.S. government to use National Guardsmen from across the country to reinforce what was thought to be an inadequate defense along the border. Villa's attack on Columbus was believed to have exposed the weaknesses of the American military. According to Senator George E. Chamberlain, Chairman of the Military Committee, the United States only had 15,000 eligible men for border service while it was projected that Mexico could organize 50,000.[222] Senators Reed Smoot and William E. Borah contributed to the argument by adding that Mexico had more field guns and were better equipped than the United States. The political critics were not only concerned with the lack of eligible men for border service but did not underestimate the difficulty of manning an extensive boundary.

In a *New York Tribune* interview an anonymous "high ranking military official" recognized the immensity of the line and felt that the undertaking would be too great for the small military:

> Persons do not realize the length of the line we would be called upon to defend to prevent raiding-parties from attacking border-towns and treating them far more terribly than Columbus was treated…The length of the Texas frontier is more than the distance from [New York] to Chicago…We talk of invading Mexico. With every regular in the United States concentrated on the border we could not defend it properly from an attack, let alone inaugurate a pursuing punitive expedition…[223]

Congress and military officials then turned to the National Guard to supplement their low numbers. However, the National Guard reporting for border duty confronted a set of

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[222] Author Unknown, "Our Unpreparedness Revealed by Villa," *The Literary Digest*, New York, April 1, 1916, p. 884.
[223] Ibid.

circumstances and obstacles that would affect their ability to successfully negotiate the borderlands region, especially in West Texas.

The National Guard in West Texas faced a number of problems. First, the rough and vast terrain of West Texas kept the guardsmen from effectively executing their responsibilities of protection and surveillance. Small canyons and other nooks in the area provided ideal hiding places that made it nearly impossible to conduct effective searches.[224] Also, some Mexicans on the Texas side of the river sympathized with the raiders and revolutionaries. They furnished them information concerning the area ranches and patrol schedules of the National Guard and other authorities. These problems caused the guardsmen to assume the added responsibility of conducting surveillance over the Mexican community. They also recruited Mexicans as guides and spies and urged local residents to provide for their own protection.

National Guard officers called on border residents to organize committees of defense and neighborhood guards under the supervision of a National Guard officer.[225] The local units, or "home guards," patrolled the international boundary and gathered intelligence on the movements and actions of Mexican on the U.S. side of the border. The commanding officers of the National Guard claimed that Mexicans in the United States were increasingly abetting revolutionary factions and activities thus causing disorder and breaching federal neutrality laws.[226] Fear among the predominantly Anglo

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[224] Wilfred Dudley Smithers, undated, unpublished essay, "Ranching and Fighting Bandits," Smithers (W.D.) Collection, The Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.
[225] Brigadier General Parker, General Orders, No. 4,'Headquarters Brownsville District, Brownsville, Texas, May 27, 1916, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas
[226] Circular Letter addressed to all commanding officers from Brigadier General Parker regarding 'neutrality,' Brigadier General James Parker, Circular Letter, Headquarters Brownsville District,

"home guards" may explain why some of them began to apply their own brand of justice on innocent Mexicans.

Overzealous locals often took action into their own hands. In places such as Culberson, Hudspeth, and Presidio counties, citizens were quick to pursue suspected Mexican raiders who had attacked desolate ranches hugging the U.S.-Mexico border. In some cases, a mere rumor was enough to trigger action. According to a former resident of Van Horn, the town's residents reacted immediately:

> A report came over the wires that Van Horn was to be raided. The men of the town gathered guns and ammunition to defend the town.[227]

The feared raid did not occur. Nevertheless, residents from all over West Texas were ready to seek out any Mexican they thought was breaking the law.

National Guardsmen contributed to the campaigns against Mexicans in other ways. In some cases, they were reckless and aggressive with them. These problems became so serious that commanding officers found it necessary to issue general orders reminding soldiers of the Mexicans' rights and the need to observe them.[228] This explains the policy of "peace and friendship" that the National Guard and the Army implemented in 1917 primarily to avoid conflicts with Mexico and local Mexicans. The National Guard, for example, posted this policy in May:

> The policy to be observed toward Mexico and Mexicans is one of peace and friendship. The same treatment will be accorded to all Mexicans by our troops, whether on or off duty, as is required by law and custom to our

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Brownsville, Texas, January 8, 1917, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas

[227] Cummings, interview, March 1, 1978.

[228] General Orders Number 4, May 27, 1916, Headquarters Brownsville Distrcit, Brownsville, Texas, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.

> own people. Following this policy in the past has resulted in much harmony between the two races.[229]

Tensions were riding high between the National Guard and local Mexican residents. Much of the reckless behavior exercised by the guardsmen was related to aggressive tactics and indiscriminate pursuit of Mexicans.

Guard units were instructed to seek the "offensive" when confronted with suspected bandits and "hunt them down and exterminate."[230] This resulted, in several occasions where innocent Mexicans were fired upon by the patrols of the National Guard:

> …There have been several instances where so-called Mexicans have been fired on in the dark by patrols of the National Guard, and where it has been altogether uncertain that the parties fired on were not attending to their legitimate business…[231]

Mexicans along the border grew increasingly distrustful of the National Guard and the U.S. Army. As a result, the units amplified the feelings of animosity and distrust among Mexicans in the border region. In some cases, Mexican residents manipulated intelligence data to thwart National Guard operations.[232]

The mobilization of the National Guard consequently increased militarization of the border but did little to effectively cement effective and adequate authority in the region. The vast and rugged terrain, especially in West Texas, forced the Guard to set up only short camps as the regiments were "split up and scattered throughout [the Big

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[229] Bulletin No. 12, May 30, 1917, Headquarters, 1st Brigade, Reinforced, 1st Provisional Infantry Division, Brownsville, Texas, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[230] General Orders Number 7, June 10, 1916, Headquarters Brownsville District, Brownsville, Texas, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[231] General Orders Number 26, August 17, 1916, Headquarters Brownsville District, Brownsville, Texas, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[232] General Orders Number 7, June 10, 1916, Headquarters Brownsville District, Brownsville, Texas, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas

Bend]."[233] Vigilance over the Mexican population was of the highest priority. General orders to monitor "suspicious" congregations of Mexicans were issued and carried out by the conjoined effort of both guardsmen and civilians.[234] Surveillance efforts were also evident within the city. The National Guard's presence in the El Paso area brought on progressive initiatives that resulted in economic hardship in many of the city's entertainment industries located in El Paso's Mexican sector "Chihuahuita."

The National Guard also conducted surveillance in El Paso. Its major challenge in El Paso, however, involved a reaction from reformers against the vice industry in "Chihuahita" which had grown in large part to service the increasing number of guardsmen and army personnel in town. Businessmen involved in gambling, prostitution, and drinking establishments eagerly promoted their services to the soldiers. As noted in a previous chapter, the call for restrictions on the vice industry caused many businesses to simply move their operations to Ciudad Juarez.

The commanding officers of the National Guard, on the other hand, responded to War Department warnings to "clean up" by restricting the movement of the soldiers.[235] According to one missive, "the war department is determined not to locate cantonments in communities maintaining a [red light] district."[236] Problems with soldiers were frequent. According to Court-Martial records from El Paso, many soldiers were arraigned for various infractions including public drunkenness, leave without permission,

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[233] Smithers, "Calling Out the Guard."
[234] General Orders Number 4, May 27, 1916. Headquarters Brownsville District, Brownsville, Texas, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[235] "Baker Puts Ban Upon Social Evil," *El Paso Morning Times*, June 3, 1917.
[236] "Ill-Fame Houses Throughout City Also Will Close," *El Paso Morning Times*, June 8, 1916.

and behavior unbecoming of an officer.[237] Problems became so serious along the border region that Congress addressed alcohol consumption and disorderly conduct in the Emergency Army Bill of May 1917. The directive read as follows:

> That the President of the United States, as Commander in Chief of the Army, is authorized to make such regulations governing the prohibition of alcoholic liquors in or near military camps and to the officers and enlisted men of the Army…that no person, corporation, partnership, or association shall sell, supply, or have in his possession any intoxicating or spirituous liquors at any military station, cantonment, camp, fort, post, officers' or enlisted men's club, which is being used at the time for military purposes under this act.[238]

According to some commanding officers who reviewed units along the border, the accessibility of the vice industry at Ciudad Juárez and El Paso handicapped the Guard's ability to effectively perform its duties and patrol the region.[239]

City officials also acted on the soldiers' behavior. The city applied the "Dead Line" policy to them. The policy prohibited soldiers from frequenting El Paso's downtown entertainment district located in and near the Mexican portion of the city and adjacent to the international bridge. The enforced "Dead Line" placed many of El Paso's downtown merchants at an economic disadvantage as profits began to decline due to the absence of soldiers. Furthermore, customers were encouraged to go to other parts of the city deemed more desirable.[240]

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[237] General Orders, No. 22 War Department, Washington, February 10, 1917, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[238] Bulletin No. 11, Copy of Sections 12, 13 and 14 of "Emergency Army Bill Against Liquor and Disorderly Resorts," Headquarters 1st Brigade, 1st Provisional Infantry Division, Brownsville, Texas, May 28, 1917, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[239] General Orders Number 22, February 10, 1917, War Department, Washington, DC, Benjamin F. Delamater Collection, Archives of Texas Military Forces Museum, Austin, Texas.
[240] Some church leaders, members of the Salvation Army, and the city council suggested "wholesome diversions" for soldiers stationed at Ft. Bliss that were not near the Chihuahuita sector of the city. "Recreation for Soldiers Here," *El Paso Herald*, June 11, 1917.

Downtown merchants sought various options that would make the district more suitable for soldiers and citizens. One of them was to regulate the district with curfews and medical examinations for the city's prostitutes.[241] Other merchants tried to cooperate with the National Guard and local police to rid the district of "undesirables" who were responsible for bootlegging and other forms of vice, presumably prostitution.[242] Despite their efforts to reopen "Chihuahuita" to soldiers and salvage their economic livelihood, the city and the Guard persisted with its enforcement of the "dead line."

Conclusion

The activation of the National Guard in 1916 signaled the elevation of local tensions and conflict to an international level. Villa's Columbus raid served as the catalyst for the mass mobilization of the U.S. Army and the newly minted National Guard. The amassing of troops served diverse purposes. In 1916, the U.S. Army engaged an international agenda with the Punitive Expedition into Mexico and the National Guard served as the source for national defense on the U.S. side of the international boundary. The National Guard provided an added "added layer" to the security initiatives already in place by local, state, and some federal authorities.

The National Guard also faced problems. Its inability to effectively negotiate the terrain and overcome the existing racial tensions handicapped their effectiveness. Furthermore, reform-minded initiatives aimed at the military brought economic hardship to business owners in El Paso's "Red Light" and downtown districts.

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[241] "Give Opinions on 'Redlight,'" *El Paso Herald*, June 20, 1917.
[242] "Want S. El Paso Street Opened," *El Paso Herald*, June 21, 1917.

The “Dead Lines” in El Paso’s downtown “Red Light” district and the resulting segregation of Mexican neighborhoods reinforced a rigid line between Anglos and Mexicans. The complete elimination of vice was never fully realized as many soldiers and patrons were simply encouraged to seek take their business to more “desirable” places outside the downtown or Mexican sector. Moreover, the issues of vice served little more than a front to further isolate Mexicans from the rest of El Paso. The military’s prohibition initiatives disrupted more than the economic structure of El Paso’s downtown entertainment district. They crystallized the divisions between Anglos and Mexicans and encouraged the view of the Mexican community as the “subject” other.

Chapter 5

"Agents Under Fire" The Border Patrol and El Paso

Introduction

Previous chapters have addressed the various types of conflict that occurred in the West Texas region. This chapter examines the history of the United States Border Patrol in El Paso, and its contribution to social divisions and racialized conflict. It addresses several policies including the immigration laws of the 1917-1918 period which targeted Mexican labor and the landmark Quota Act of 1924 that led to the establishment of the Border Patrol. The National Prohibition Act of 1919 also figured prominently in the story of the Border Patrol. The agency was responsible for enforcing the law which prohibited the manufacture, transportation and sale of beverages that contained more than 0.5 per cent alcohol. These policies contributed to the establishment of legal and political authority in West Texas and in worsening social relations between Mexicans and Anglos. The Border Patrol strengthened federal authority along the border and contributed to the image of the Mexican as the foreign "other." The agency, however, did not just enforce immigration and prohibition laws but also mediated differences between nativists who called for stricter restrictions on Mexican immigration and farmers who wanted an uninterrupted flow of low wage labor.[243]

[243] Much of the history on the United States Border Patrol is drawn from the following works; Alvin Edward Moore, *Border Patrol* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1988); Clifford Allan Perkins, *Border Patrol: With the U.S. Immigration Service on the Mexican boundary, 1910-1954* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1978); Mary Rak, *Border Patrol* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1938); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

This chapter's objective is to demonstrate the importance of border security in the region and how it changed over time. Enforcement practices, of course, reflected policy changes in immigration and prohibition laws as well as the accommodated needs of employers, mostly farmers. Also, an increase in the Mexican population created a "race problem" that encouraged restrictionists to call for stricter enforcement. Strong restrictionist sentiments gave greater significance to the enforcement of the National Quota Act of 1924 while "cultural nationalism of the late nineteenth century had transformed into a nationalism based on race."[244] Mexican immigration increased exponentially since the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution and did not diminished after armed conflict had subsided at the end of the second decade. By the early 1920s, nativist groups identified Mexican immigrants as a threat to the ethnic, economic, and cultural fabric of the United States.

History of the United States Border Patrol

The Border Patrol emerged with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the establishment of the Chinese Division of the Immigration Service, which operated within the Department of Labor. The Act reduced Chinese immigration and limited the immigrant labor supply for U.S. industries like mining, railroads and agriculture.[245] According to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigration was

[244] Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 23.

[245] The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 saw at least three major amendments that expanded the number of Chinese who were prohibited from entering the United States. First, the act was intended to prohibit laborers. The second amendment prohibited all immigrants from China except for diplomats, teachers, students, and tourists. Finally, in 1902 immigration from China was completely prohibited. For more information on the changing nature of Chinese immigration policy, see: Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

to be limited until otherwise provided by law.[246] Enforcement duties fell on the United States Customs Service which had patrols known as the "line riders" or "mounted guard" serving principally on the Mexican border.[247] The "Mounted Guard" consisted of former and active Texas Rangers, Sheriffs of border counties, and deputized cowboys.[248] The Customs Service had been entrusted to prevent all illegal smuggling, including Chinese aliens. However, the task overwhelmed the Customs Service and the apprehension of illegal immigrants fell on the shoulders of the Immigration Service in 1903.

In 1904, the El Paso area received some of the first mounted immigration officers to patrol the U.S.-Mexican border for illegal Chinese immigrants. Though the U.S.'s southern border became a focal point at the turn of the century for apprehending illegal immigrants, Mexican immigration was largely inconspicuous. The massive influx of European immigrants at Ellis Island and the geographic isolation of the American southwest allowed Mexicans to remain under the radar screen.[249] Moreover, virulent anti-Chinese campaigns and the resultant declining numbers of Chinese labor in agriculture and railroad industries in the West and Southwest left a vacuum which Mexicans eagerly filled in increasing numbers.[250] Despite this, the primary focus of the Immigration Service remained in the restriction of Chinese immigration.

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[246] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 7.
[247] Ibid, p. 9.
[248] "The United States Border Patrol, 1924-1999, El Paso Sector: Where the Legend Began," pamphlet published by the El Paso Border Patrol Office, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.
[249] Mark Reisler, "Always the Laborer, Never the Citizen: Anglo Perceptions of the Mexican Immigrant During the 1920s," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 2, (May 1976), p. 233.
[250] For more on increased Mexican labor at the turn of the century, see: Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1948); Rudolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (New York: Harper & Row, c1981); Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1993).

The Immigration Service created a section called the Chinese Division and labeled its officers Chinese Inspectors. Line riders aided the new division with apprehensions as they were familiar with scouting detail along the international boundary and border community residents.[251] According to Chinese Inspector, Clifford Alan Perkins, many of the illegal entries continued to cross the Mexican border but they began to abide by different patterns of movement:

> By the time I joined the Service [1910], few Chinese were coming in east of El Paso. Some continued to enter through gulf and west coast ports, but by far the greatest numbers were entering in the vicinity of towns on or near the Mexican border.[252]

Work along the line was difficult as few officers had been commissioned, the territory was extensive, and smuggling rings were very efficient. For instance, highly sophisticated civil or legal groups, such as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, better known to Americans as the Chinese Six Companies, operated highly successful human trafficking rings from Mexico and in the U.S. to smuggle undocumented immigrants.[253]

The Immigration Service officers inspected incoming traffic at major sea and air ports, at rail terminals, and along vehicular access routes. Officers maintained surveillance of backcountry areas and forecast crossing periods by monitoring habits and trends.[254] The officers increased their inspections over time especially along railroad lines as labor agents utilized box cars to transport Chinese migrants. A steady decline

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[251] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 9.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 62.

ensued as illegal immigration enforcement became stricter and Mexican immigrant flows increased and laborers filtered into industries once dominated by Chinese workers, including railroads and agriculture,.

In the 1910s, the Immigration office in El Paso was responsible for an expansive sector with jurisdiction over the western portion of Texas including the area that stretched from Del Rio to Yuma, Arizona. In 1913, the El Paso headquarters employed approximately thirty-five officers and over twenty-five staff members.[255] The Mexican Revolution changed this. Prior to the historic conflagration, Mexican immigrants had been entering in increasing numbers to work in the rapidly expanding agriculture, railroad, and mining industries. The economic dislocation and political instability associated with the Revolution placed an added pressure on Mexicans to head north and across the border in search of better and safe opportunities. Immigration authorities, consequently, assumed the added responsibility of housing and caring for destitute refugees fleeing the conflict. The U.S. government constructed a temporary camp near the river that was guarded by U.S. Army servicemen from Fort Bliss.[256] The crude and temporary detentions facilities were used to aid and feed the refugees in addition to curbing the number of beggars roaming the streets of downtown El Paso. Once the fighting on the Mexican side of the border had subsided and a semblance of peace had emerged in Ciudad Juárez, Border Patrol officers repatriated some of the immigrants.

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[254] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 13.
[255] Ibid, p. 33.
[256] Mario García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 41

The social and political instability caused by the Mexican Revolution complicated immigration matters. Ports of entry were flooded by destitute refugees as violence escalated in Mexico and especially along the Mexican side of the border. By 1914, Mexicans were a noticeable presence in the agricultural regions of Texas and California.[257] Texas A&M professor William Edward Garnett identified the influx of Mexicans, or "Mexican invasion" as "undoubtedly the most pressing race question that confronted Texas."[258] The significant Mexican population growth urged restrictionists to reevaluate the social and racial value of Mexicans and conclude that the integration of the Mexican population would disrupt the racial homogeneity of the Texas population. The immigrant flow continued relatively uninterrupted until the United States entered World War I, in 1917. Security concerns, a growing restrictionist critique of immigration policy and enforcement, and the need for more efficient wartime methods for regulating the immigrant flow contributed to the new restrictive immigration policy that was passed that year. The new policy affected work on the border. In 1917, the former Chinese Inspectors who were now known as Immigrant Inspectors assumed greater responsibilities.

The 1917 Act also included a new "head tax," literacy requirements, and time limits on labor contracts. However, as the United States sought to limit the entry of persons believed to be public charges, immigration authorities along the border also relaxed the restrictions to encourage the entry of Mexican laborers and assist area

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[257] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, p. 129.
[258] William Edward Garnett, "Immediate and Pressing Race Problems of Texas," *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Southwestern Political and Social Science Association*, ed. Caleb Perry Patterson (Austin: The Southwestern Political and Social Science Association, 1925), p. 32.

agriculturalists meet their harvest needs. After World War I, agriculture in the Southwest expanded even more. At least two consequences became evident. Since many of the immigrants increasingly chose to remain in the U.S., Mexican communities throughout the Southwest and other parts of the United States grew significantly during the 1920s and early 1930s. Also, new immigration policies were enacted to regulate the existing flows in accordance with the needs of employers in the United States.

The Immigration Act of 1924, also known as the Johnson-Reed Act, established the Border Patrol. The Act of 1924 established the outfit as a uniformed law enforcement agency of the Immigration Bureau, which operated within the Department of Labor.[259] The Border Patrol's place within the Department of Labor spoke to the prominent role that immigration played in the story of labor supply and demand on the border region. Not surprisingly, a West Texas rancher with experience in the recruitment and use of Mexican labor became the strongest supporter of the bill that resulted in the Act of 1924. Congressman Claude Hudspeth owned a large sheep ranch near Del Rio, Texas, and served largely as a representative of the stockmen in the area. When Congress passed the Act of 1924, Congressman Hudspeth successfully pushed for a rider to the appropriations bill that provided for at least one million dollars for a land border patrol. One hundred thousand dollars were to be made available immediately.[260]

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[259] Leon C. Metz, "A Brief History of the United States Border Patrol," unpublished article, Dale Swancutt Papers, The National Border Patrol Museum, El Paso, Texas.
[260] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 89.

The first Border Patrol unit consisted of 450 "Patrol Inspectors" who were dispersed along the Canadian and Mexican boundaries as well as the Florida coastline.[261] The agency's first national headquarters were in El Paso, which also functioned as a regional sector for the Border Patrol. Its regional jurisdiction consisted of New Mexico and the three western counties of Texas. El Paso was manned by approximately forty patrol officers, however, only a few were dispatched on scouting missions since it took months for the enrollees to train. The other sector headquarters included Marfa, Texas (1924), Gainesville, Florida (1925), Rouses Point, New York (1926), and Grand Forks, South Dakota (1939). Initially Inspectors wore their own clothing, received $1,300 a year, and furnished their own horses and feed.

In West Texas, the Border Patrol was initially composed of mostly former "roughnecks" who had previously served as Texas Rangers or deputized cowboys. The Border Patrol unit at El Paso operated under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Hubert C. Horsley with twenty-five "cowboys" who only needed a passing knowledge of Spanish and the ability to ride a horse.[262] Border patrol service had lax requirements, unspecified duties, and the organization was unclear on the extent of its authority. According to one of the "first" recruits serving along the Texas-Mexico border in 1924, little was known of their actual duties, "no one knew what we were supposed to do or

[261] "United States Border Patrol—Protecting Our Sovereign Borders," http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/border_patrol/history.xml (accessed April 11, 2007).
[262] Ibid.

how we were supposed to do it."[263] Former Border Patrolman Wesley Stiles noted that his responsibilities were simple:

> Catch Aliens. That's what we were supposed to do. The thing that established the Border Patrol was the influx of European aliens. Getting out of Europe from the depression there, coming through Mexico and into the United States. That was the main purpose of the Border Patrol that was organized and went into effect…[264]

They were simply equipped with the instruction to "look for aliens" and a little law book that gave them quick information on the recent and standing immigration laws in the United States.[265]

The overall responsibility of the Border Patrol was to manage the numerical limits specified in the Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924.[266] In May 1921, Congress passed the Quota Act which restricted immigration to 355,000 a year and set a quota for each European country at 3 percent of the number of foreign-born persons of such nationality residing in the United States as determined by the census of 1910.[267] For many restrictionists, such as the Ku Klux Klan, greater restrictions were needed to "prevent America from becoming the melting pot or dumping ground of the world.[268] As a result of extensive political and social pressure from restrictionists, Congress passed a more comprehensive quota bill in 1924. The Immigration Act of 1924 made several key

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[263] Wesley E. Stiles, interview by Wesley C. Shaw, January 1986, Interview 756, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.
[266] The Quota Act of 1921 is also known as the "Emergency Quota Act." The Immigration Act of 1924 is also known as the "Johnson-Reed Act." Both Acts outlined quota restrictions for foreign immigration into the United States.
[267] Act of May 19, 1921: The Quota Act of 1921, 42 Stat. 5; 8 U.S.C. 229.
[268] *Papers Read at the Meeting of Grand Dragons, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*, (New York: Arno Press, 1977), pp. 69-74.

changes to the 1921 Act. First, it revised the numerical value of the quotas from 3 percent to 2 percent. Second, it based the quotas on the 1890 census, which shifted the immigrant flow into the United States away from Southern and Eastern Europeans. The 1890 formula reduced the level of immigration to 155,000 per year and reduced the proportion of southern and eastern European immigration to 15 percent of the total.[269]

A standard procedure that involved a very basic legal process outlined the enforcement of the quota acts. Border Patrolmen would request an arrest warrant from the Secretary of Labor if someone was thought to be in the country illegally. A court hearing would be held and legal counsel would be present if requested by the accused. If the immigrant was found guilty of entering the country illegally, paperwork regarding his deportation was sent to the Department of Labor. At this point the alien was secured his legal documents and at the government's expense sent to an appropriate port of embarkation depending on where he originated. In case of Mexican deportation, many were given the option of "voluntary return" and carted back to Mexico.[270]

Nationalism and race played a prominent role in both the Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924. As a result of intense lobbying from the Ku Klux Klan, the American Federation of Labor, and restrictionist-minded politicians, a renewed emphasis was placed on patrolling the land borders and tightening up the enforcement of the law, especially along the southern border.[271] W. A. Whalen, the District Immigration

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[269] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, p. 21.

[270] Statements of Hon. Robe Carl White, Hon. E. Hull, Mr. W.H. Wagner, U.S. Congress, Hearings Before the Committee On Immigration and Naturalization, Sixty-Ninth Congress, 1st Session, January 12, 1926, pp. 23-55.

[271] Michael Lemay and Elliot Robert Barkan, eds., *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws and Issues: A Documentary History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), pp. 129, 140-145.

Inspection Director, underscored this point in bold bureaucratic terms: "[the U.S.-Mexico boundary] must be guarded against the surreptitious entry of undesirable aliens ..."[272] Mexican immigrants emerged as the focal point in immigration discussion primarily because of their exemption from the quota laws and the oversupply of labor pools in some urban areas.[273] The focus on Mexican immigration yielded yet another reorganization of the Border Patrol that recognized El Paso as a major point for the crossing of immigrants as well as alcoholic contraband.

In order to restrict the flow of contraband and immigrants more effectively, the Border Patrol was placed under the authority of two directors in 1932. One was in charge of the Mexican border office at El Paso. Liquor smuggling was a major concern because it was thought to accompany immigrant smuggling as well.[274] Smugglers used various methods to bring contraband across the international boundary. As a result, the Border Patrol was modernized throughout the late 1920s and 1930s. This involved standardized training. The first Training School, "Camp Chigas", was located in El Paso near the downtown area. Training included functional "Border Spanish" and immigration laws and it lasted four hours per day.[275] The training reflected the expanded function of the Border Patrol. It was not only regulating the labor flows but it increasingly assumed stricter law enforcement responsibilities that included the protection of America's moral

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[272] John M. Myers, *Border Wardens* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 35.
[273] Ibid, p. 209.
[274] "United States Border Patrol—Protecting Our Sovereign Borders," http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/toolbox/about/hitsory/ins_history.xml (accessed April 17, 2007).
[275] "The History of the United States Border Patrol," unpublished essay, United States Border Patrol, 1924-1999, Border Patrol Vertical File, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.

agenda in prohibition and its ethnic purity. The Great Depression brought the issues of labor and race to the forefront as prohibition laws were lifted in 1933.

The stock market crash of 1929 and the resulting Great Depression decreased immigration flows for several reasons. First, employment opportunities became scarce. Second, the restrictionist critique gathered popular racial support. The Border Patrol thus became more aggressive in apprehending and deporting more Mexicans.[276] U.S. consular offices also increasingly denied visas to Mexicans and immigration authorities began to more strictly enforce provisions of the Immigration Act of 1917 that denied entry to individuals liable to become public charges. By 1930, all visa requests by Mexican common laborers were denied.[277] By the 1930s the apprehensions along the Mexican border significantly outnumbered those along the Canadian border.[278] The result was the deportation or voluntary movement back to Mexico of approximately 500,000 Mexico and U.S.-born Mexicans, the latter usually sons and daughters of the immigrants.[279]

On December 9, 1930, newly appointed Secretary of Labor William Doak announced that his solution to the high unemployment rate in the United States was to deport immigrants holding jobs.[280] Although he did not identify specific immigrant groups, the initiative greatly affected the Mexican community. The effort, however, required manpower that far exceeded the capabilities of the Border Patrol. Agency

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[276] Ngai, *Imossible Subjects*, p. 70.
[277] Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974), p. 54.
[278] Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, p. 70.
[279] Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression*, pp. 54-55.
[280] Abraham Hoffman, "Stimulus to Repatriation: The 1931 Federal Deportation Drive and the Los Angeles Mexican Community," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 42, No. 2, (May 1973), p. 206.

officials responded to this by recruiting local and state law enforcement authorities to help in the deportations.[281]

The Border Patrol also coordinated publicity stunts to scare immigrants back to their native homeland. In some cases, press releases announced mass deportation drives and noted that local authorities would join in the effort in substantial numbers.[282] Mexicans and those of the Asiatic Barred Zone were specifically targeted.[283] The agency also coordinated apprehension sweeps. On February 13, 1931, for example, Border Patrol agents performed a raid in the El Monte area of Los Angeles questioning 300 people of which thirteen were arrested. Twelve of the thirteen were Mexicans with no criminal record and charged only with failure to prove legal entry.[284] Between 1929 and 1931, Mexican repatriation often involved raids in private homes and workplaces by the Border Patrol and other government officials.

Los Angeles city officials were especially concerned that Mexicans were taking an inordinate amount of the relief services made available to the large number of unemployed workers.[285] The raids yielded few results and many of the Mexicans who

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[281] The recruitment of local and state authorities was also used to provide what was called a "psychological gesture." Los Angeles Citizens' Relief Committee Coordinator, Charles P. Visel, believed that adding more Border Patrol agents to the Los Angeles area would provide a hostile environment for immigrants prompting them to leave their jobs and homes voluntarily, Ibid, p. 208.

[282] Ibid, p. 209.

[283] The Immigration Act of 1917 regulated the admission of Aliens that included classes of aliens that should be excluded from admission into the United States. Among the excluded classes were Asian Indians and all other native inhabitants of a "barred Asiatic Zone" that ran from Afghanistan to the Pacific. For more information see: "Act of February 5, 1917: Immigration Act of 1917, 39 Stat. 874; 8 U.S.C; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Michael LeMay and Elliot Robert Barkan, eds., *U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Laws and Issues* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999).

[284] Hoffman, "Stimulus to Repatriation," p. 206.

[285] Ibid.

returned to Mexico left voluntarily because of their high unemployment and destitute condition.[286] The Los Angeles round-ups were repeated across the country.

Mexicans in the 1930s were at the center of the immigration debate. The heightened tension associated with the strict enforcement of immigration laws painted a negative image of Mexicans and contributed greatly to presenting them as scapegoats for the economic crisis.[287] Increased Mexican migration within and beyond the Southwest, high unemployment rates in the early years of the Great Depression, also increased the restrictionist rhetoric. The Border Patrol found itself in the middle of the highly emotional debate between restrictionists and anti-restrictionists which became especially pronounced in the 1920s and 1930s. The Mexican was also caught in the anti-immigration rhetoric. Scapegoating and unsettling deportations caused much misery in the Mexican community. Their incorporation into American society was also disrupted.

The Border Patrol and the Mexican Community

The challenge of integrating the Mexican community into American society can be best understood by examining their role as immigrant labor and its relationship with the Border Patrol. Mexican labor distinguished itself in the late 1910s and 1920s when it registered high immigrant figures and assumed a migratory character in agriculture. Immigration was primarily a response to the labor needs in Southwestern industries, particularly agriculture. Their movement across the border and throughout the

[286] Abraham Hoffman, "Mexican Repatriation Statistics: Some Suggested Alternatives to Carey McWilliams," *The Western Historical Quarterly*,Vol. 3, No. 4 (October 1972), pp. 391-404.

[287] Mark Reisler, "Always the Laborer, Never the Citizen: Anglo Perceptions of the Mexican Immigrant During the 1920s," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 45, No. 2, (May 1976), p. 233.

Southwest, the Far West, and the Midwest typically followed the maturation patterns in agriculture and the recruitment activities of their employers. This gave rise to a migratory work force that provided a number of challenges to the Border Patrol, as its patrolmen sought to enforce the law and avoid denying farmers the immigrant workers they needed. The mediating role that they played in West Texas can be appreciated by examining immigration policies and enforcement activities that preceded the National Quota Act of 1924.

Immigration policy was revised following the passage of the Immigration Act of 1917. The Department of Labor, for instance, established the Temporary Admissions Program which permitted approximately 80,000 Mexicans to work as a "guest-workers" in selected industries.[288] The growing demand for laborers, especially from Mexico, eventually led to the designation of the Immigration Inspectors as labor and immigration brokers who regulated and monitored the flow of labor from Mexico. They worked hand in hand with agricultural employers to meet labor demands in various industries.

In 1917, the Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson allowed for a labor importation program during wartime that introduced workers for the agricultural, mining, and railroad industries. Immigration officers and railroad companies from El Paso collaborated fully in the guest worker program. After a successful evaluation that included physical examinations and intensive interrogations, laborers were escorted by Immigration Inspectors to the rear of the immigration office building to hear labor agents "pitch" their company's services:

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[288] Oscar J. Martínez, *Mexican-Origin People in the United States: A Topical History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), p. 28.

> The employer's representatives would make speeches about the delightful quarters, good pay and fine food they would have if they went to work for their company. When the promising was over, the [labor] agents would shout, 'This way for the Santa Fe,' 'This way for the Southern Pacific...'[289]

The obvious purpose of the change was to fill the void left by the previous strict immigration policies of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the U.S.'s entry into World War I, and the labor drop offs resulting from the Immigration Act of 1917.

The first labor importation program guaranteed employers a legal process of labor contracting at the border. Agriculturalists, of course, could still depend on the larger number of workers who were crossing without the direct assistance of government officials. The labor importation program, in other words, institutionalized a process of close cooperation between government officials and farmers and provided prospective employers a more rational and legal system to insure a ready labor supply. At a more general level, the Immigration Service continued to mediate the flow of labor to satisfy the requests of employers in the United States at the same time that it enforced immigration policy:

> …Immigration officers will attend to the admission and distribution of [Mexican] laborers…respective employers of the agreements required under departmental orders…will cooperate with immigration officials in keeping track of laborers after they are admitted and in establishing and enforcing a follow-up system, to insure as far as possible, the eventual return to Mexico of those admitted…[290]

The amended policies of 1917 and 1918 introduced a seeming contradiction between the law and its enforcement. Although the policy itself was relaxed to allow for the admission of more immigrants and to coordinate their movement more effectively,

[289] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 54.

officials on the border did not enforce the law strictly. As labor demands escalated due to "wartime" crisis, immigration enforcement was relaxed.[291]

The ebb and flow of Mexican immigration rested primarily on the actions of the Border Patrol. The agency enforced the official and private practice of placing immigrant laborers in needed industries and restricting the overflow of unwanted immigrants into nearby towns and cities. Border Patrolmen, E.A. "Dogie" Wright indicated this much when he told ranchers to "let me know when he's gonna leave so I can pick him back up."[292] The system of cooperation between the farmers and the Border Patrol systematically controlled Mexican movement.

The relationship between employers and the Border Patrol was significant in regulating the marginal social status of Mexicans. In the mid-1920s, farmers in Texas worked in tandem with the Border Patrol to fix Mexican farm wages by restricting the mobility of agricultural workers who sought higher wages. The average wage of Mexican laborers in Texas in 1926 and 1927 was the lowest in the south and southwestern region of the country. Anglo farmers in Texas saw a clear distinction between Anglo wages and Mexican wages and sought the help of the Border Patrol to

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[290] "Mexican Laborers," *U.S. Immigration Service Bulletin*, Washington, D.C., Vol. 1, No. 7, (October 1, 1918), p. 2.

[291] For more information on the "series" of amendments regarding temporary work status for Mexican and Canadian laborers, see: "Amended Revised Rules for the Admission of Agricultural and Other Laborers," *U.S. Immigration Service Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (June 1, 1918), p. 1; "Mexican Farm Laborers," *U.S. Immigration Service Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (August 1, 1918), p. 7; "Laborers From Mexico for Sugar-Beet Production," *U.S. Immigration Service Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (January 1, 1919), p. 1

[292] Kathleen Lytle Hernandez, "Entangled Bodies and Borders: Racial Profiling and the U.S. Border Patrol, 1924-1955," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 2002, p. 174; E. A. Wright, interviewed by Jim Cullen, June 14, 1983, interview No. 86, Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas.

regulate those divisions.[293] However, the same time the Border Patrol regulated labor flows and enforced immigration policy, prohibition laws detracted the agency.

The work of the Border Patrol became more complicated in 1920s and early 1930s when its agents began to devote more of their attention to the smuggling of alcohol. Mexican border residents often engaged in a "cat and mouse" game with the border patrolmen knowing that they were practically incapable of enforcing immigration laws as well as prohibition policies. Moreover, the high demand for alcohol in the United States created a lucrative and profitable market. Smugglers were willing to protect their valuable commodity by any means necessary and, as a result, violence often erupted between smugglers and the Border Patrol.

Once again, the Mexican community experienced things differently. Prohibitionists generally saw Mexican communities as bastions for alcoholic consumption that promoted "temptation, contamination, and damnation." The general public also associated the contraband business with Mexicans. This reinforced the view of Mexicans as unsuitable members of American society.[294] Violent clashes between the Border Patrol and Mexican smugglers also added to negative public perceptions.[295] In short, the Border Patrol's responsibilities of enforcing both immigration and prohibition laws deepened divisions between Mexicans and Anglos. This became evident in West Texas, especially in El Paso.

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[293] David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1987), pp. 188-189.
[294] Lewis L. Gould, *Progressives and Prohibitionists: Texas Democrats in the Wilson Era* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1973), pp. 50-51.
[295] "Statement of Robert Caldwell made on February 15, 1930," anonymous manuscript, E.A. "Dogie" Wright Papers, the Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. The document describes

Throughout the Prohibition Era (1920-1933), El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, became sites of tension and conflict. In one fourteen-month period during the late 1920s, nineteen Border Patrol officers were killed in the line of duty.[296] According to some newspapers reports, gun battles occurred almost daily near the international crossing.[297] This was a natural consequence of the fact that the West Texas region and the corresponding border area on the Mexican side had become a major staging and crossing point for smuggling immigrants and alcohol.

In a statement to the House of Representatives' Committee of Immigration and Naturalization, District Director of Immigration at El Paso, Grover C. Wilmuth, emphasized that much of the illegal contraband and human crossings occurred in the vicinity of the city:

> …At El Paso—about 90 per cent of the crossing is done right in the vicinity of El Paso…Yes, they cross all up and down the Rio Grande in the vicinity of El Paso. That is within, say, 5 miles…Most of the liquor and alien smugglers work close to town. The reason for that is that if they get farther out away from the settlements—on the banks of the Rio Grande all along near town there are Mexican settlements, and if they can get across safely they can run for harbor or shelter in one of these Mexican houses along there [on the American side], and unless you see them and trail them in you will never find them.[298]

In 1927 alone, the Border Patrol seized over three-thousand gallons of liquor and over 3200 illegal immigrants in El Paso.[299]

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the circumstances of border patrolmen Robert Caldwell's kidnapping by Mexican smugglers near Ciudad Juárez.

[296] "Border Patrol Shoot-Outs Plagued City," *El Paso Times*, June 5, 1981.

[297] "Border Patrolmen Recall Early Gun Fights," *El Paso Herald*, May 21, 1974.

[298] U.S. Congress, "Immigration Border Patrol," Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization House of Representatives, Seventieth Congress, 1st Session, March 5, 1928, pp. 3-4.

[299] "Border Patrolmen Recall Early Gun Fights," *El Paso Herald Post*, May 21, 1974. The newspaper article is the first of two stories on the Border Patrol during its 50th Anniversary celebration in El Paso.

Mary Rak, an early Border Patrol historian, noted that one of the more troubled locations existed near El Paso. It was "Cordova Island," a "small body of land, entirely surrounded by trouble."[300] During Prohibition, Cordova Island was a notorious haven for smugglers; it was almost completely surrounded by American soil, but lay outside the city limits of Ciudad Juárez, a "no-man's land" on the border.[301] According to many patrolmen and other authorities, Cordova Island's topography was enough to offer protection to smugglers, or *contrabandistas* as they were known in the area. A screen of brush and cottonwoods littered the Mexican side of the one-time riverbed, and the densely packed maze of Mexican homes on the American side gave immediate shelter to smugglers.[302]

Border patrolmen considered some areas around downtown El Paso as "hot spots", as the following interview with a former border patrolmen indicates:

> You know, you'd maybe go into Eighth and Ninth Street…and they'd start shooting at you. You'd crawl on your belly so you could return the fire. I've had bullets throw gravel in my face; they've come pretty close.[303]

Violence, in fact, became a common occurrence as customs agents and the Border Patrol sought out and confronted smugglers. Newspaper reports from February 1927, for example, suggest that not one twenty-four hour period passed without a report of gunfire along the border between Fort Hancock and Anapra, a seventy-mile stretch extending east

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Bob Ybarra of the *El Paso Herald Post* interviewed several "old-timers," including Edwin Reeves, E. A. "Dogie" Wright, and others at the Border Patrol Headquarters in El Paso.

[300] Rak, *Border Patrol*, p. 76.

[301] "Cordova Island," *Handbook of Texas Online*, http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/CC/rrc4.html (accessed on February 15, 2007).

[302] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 69.

[303] Edwin Reeves, interview by Richard Novak, June 24, 1974, Interview No. 135, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.

and west of El Paso's city limits.[304] Thirty-two gun battles were also reported that same year.[305] An older resident of El Paso who had emigrated from Mexico once recounted that "every night people would get caught in the crossfire and both Mexicans and Americans died."[306] El Paso presented major difficulties to the Border Patrol, especially since cooperative measures once utilized by other law enforcement agencies no longer existed.

The difficult conditions on the border involved Mexican officials. Mexican Fiscal Guards, or *fiscales*, worked closely with smugglers and persons interested in immigrating illegally to the United States. The cooperation of earlier times was no longer evident. Both groups promoted official policies that sought peaceful relations. The *fiscales*, however, generally supported illegal border crossers much like the Border Patrol looked the other way when farmers recruited Mexicans on both sides of the border.

The fiscal guards would often position themselves in areas where known smugglers would congregate and force them to pay a nominal fee to guarantee free and safe passage. According to at least one apprehended smuggler, *fiscales* were a prominent fixture in the contraband business:

> …There have been some Fiscal Guards on the levee as they usually come down for the purpose of collecting fees from 'Cucho' for allowing him to run liquor over the river. One 'fiscale' came down tonight and made 'cucho' pay him five pesos for each of the eight loads which we were to

[304] Leon Metz, "A Brief History of the United States Border Patrol," Unpublished essay, The National Border Patrol Museum, El Paso, Texas.
[305] "Border Patrolmen Recall Early Gun Fights," *El Paso Herald*, May 21, 1974.
[306] Mauricio Cordero, interview by Oscar Martinez, February 15, 1974, interview No. 142, transcript, Institute of Oral History, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso.

> bring across. I know that money is turned to the Fiscal Guards for passing liquor…[307]

It is suggested that as long as smuggling retained considerable value, Mexican *fiscales* stood to benefit economically and therefore resisted cooperation with the Border Patrol. The combined efforts of residents and officials to resist prohibition policy further isolated the Border Patrol from community.

According to a patrolman, the passing of the prohibition laws in West Texas increased the lawlessness.[308] Rum runners were especially violent and were considered ready to fight at the "drop of a hat." Famed border patrolmen E.A. "Dogie" Wright added that "there was much public sentiment against those officers who enforced the law."[309] On numerous occasions, the smugglers would drop their cargo at the point of possible apprehension and flee back to Mexico. Once near or on the Mexican side of the boundary, smugglers would often fire on the border patrolmen. Another border patrolman described one such encounter:

> …When challenged to halt the smugglers dropped their loads and ran through the Box Factory Fence. When one of the smugglers reached the Box Factory platform he turned and fired two shots at our officers and further when the smugglers were making good their escape into the settlement…[310]

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[307] "Statement of Enrique Duenas made at the El Paso's Border Patrol Headquarters to Chief Inspector H.C. Horsley on July 29, 1929," E.A. 'Dogie' Wright Papers, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

[308] Perkins, *Border Patrol*, p. 83.

[309] "Border Patrolmen Recall Early Gun Fights," *El Paso Herald Post*, May 21, 1974.

[310] "Case XII. October 21, 1930," anonymous manuscript, E.A. "Dogie" Wright Papers, the Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. This document describes various encounters by Border Patrolmen with Mexican smugglers.

The isolated episodes of seemingly spiteful acts against the Border Patrol emphasize the wide-range of violence that existed in West Texas. More importantly, it underscores the raging animosity that persisted between Anglo authority and a resistant community.

Conclusion

The history of the Border Patrol, especially in West Texas, reveals that border work involved changing responsibilities that reflected important political and economic trends, including immigrant flows that corresponded to distinct phases in the industrialization of the southwestern economy and a spirited national discourse over immigration policy that followed the up and down motion of the economy. The Border Patrol and its predecessors helped mediate growers' demands for foreign-born labor and the demands by restrictionists for stricter immigration controls. Growers and federal officers worked jointly in regulating the flow and distribution of labor by systematically monitoring the immigrant and assigning them to low-wage jobs. The added responsibility of enforcing prohibition complicated the Border Patrol's ability to do it job. The lack of cooperation with Mexican officials made it even more difficult for the federal agency to enforce the law.

The ambiguous enforcement of immigration policy in the mid 1910s affected the incorporation of the Mexican into American society. The relaxation of the immigration laws of 1917, for instance, allowed Mexican laborers to avoid various restrictions.[311]

[311] In the 1918 "U.S. Immigration Service Bulletin" updates on laws and amendments are published to inform immigration officers of their duties. In various months throughout 1918, notices are given to the officers to allow Mexicans into a variety of low-wage jobs under the supervision of the employer and immigration office. Suveillance of the workers was utilized to prevent them from seeking higher-paying

Greater accessibility to the United States, however, did not necessarily mean that the workers could travel freely and obtain jobs according to their training and experience. The immigrants were mostly channeled to work in low-wage and low-skilled jobs in agriculture. Their movement was regulated by recruiters representing various southwestern industries. These recruiters often worked together and in collaboration with government agencies like the Border Patrol. The idea was to guarantee agriculturalists the workers that they needed, especially during harvest time.

The Border Patrol assisted these recruitment and distribution activities on the border mostly by looking the other way when immigrants crossed and recruiters enticed them to different farming areas. The agency was able to fulfill its official responsibilities by conducting raids in urban areas and in stepping up apprehension after the harvests had been completed. The ambiguous nature of enforcement only spoke to this seeming contradiction. Immigration enforcement, however, responded to certain logic of labor control, that is, immigration policy could be applied in a flexible manner to accommodate southwestern employers.

Enforcing prohibition was less ambiguous, although it complicated the job of Border patrolmen many of whom described the 1920s as the most violent years in the history of the Border Patrol.[312] The added responsibility of patrolling for contraband liquor was enough to challenge the ability of the Border Patrol to effectively guard the border. The violence, abetted partly my Mexican officials, complicated matters further. In the process of enforcing prohibition laws, the Border Patrol further antagonized local

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jobs. *U.S. Immigration Service Bulletin*, published monthly under the direction of the Commissioner General of Immigration, U.S. Department of Labor, April 1, 1918-August 1, 1919.

residents. Mexican immigrants were already chafing under the watchful eye of border patrolmen. Their action against liquor smugglers, most of whom were Mexicans, and the violence that accompanied this enforcement activity alienated the Mexican community more. Anglo businessmen and consumers who supported the illicit trade also reacted to the work of the Border Patrol. The Mexican community, however, came out of this story the greatest loser because they endured the inconsistent enforcement of immigration policy as well as the negative image of a law-breaking foreigner who threatened to depress wages and displace U.S. workers.

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[312] "Border Patrolmen Recall Early Gun Fights," *El Paso Herald Post*, May 21, 1974.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study examined the history of West Texas and northern Mexico between 1895 and 1924 with a special focus on the establishment of U.S. militarization and its connection to racialized social relations. An emphasis on West Texas as a border region that includes the towns of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez provided a transnational perspective from which to study national and regional histories. The study highlights events and authority figures throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to demonstrate how militarization of the region as a pacification, border security, and institutional building initiative incorporated the region and its people into the political and cultural orbit of the United States. The border was initially militarized in the last half of the nineteenth century to pacify the region and to prepare it for eventual incorporation into the U.S.'s socio-economy. U.S. authority was firmly established during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century despite challenges that included a general state of lawlessness, great distance from centers of power in Austin and Washington, D.C., and the use of Mexico as a safe haven for clandestine behavior and a staging area for violent depredations into Texas. Establishing authority was not without its problems as many West Texas residents often reacted to the imposition of order. Framing this give and take process were experiences, policies, and programs that included progressive reform, the Mexican Revolution, racial conflict, and immigration.

West Texas, especially El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, was an important international commercial and political staging point throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. The region boasted a growing population and significant economic development in the late 1880s and 1890s which was spearheaded by the construction of the railroad connecting the cities to their national centers. The heavy flow of immigrants crossing through El Paso and Ciudad Juárez reflected and reinforced the region's development into a bustling port of trade and commerce between the United States and Mexico.

The study focused on the period between 1895 and 1924 in order to measure change in the early development of the border region's authority structure. The last half of the nineteenth century was characterized by efforts to militarily pacify the region and establish basic American institutions such as schools, banks, and commercial enterprises. Pacification followed a period of wars—the Texas war for independence and the Mexican American War—and the persistence of violence that often took the form of racial and international conflict. The turn of the century and the early 1900s, on the other hand, witnessed the establishment of American rule, although conflict continued largely as a result of efforts to discipline the region's population into an American cultural enclave.

This study underscores the importance of the distant state, regional, and local authorities involved in the incorporation of the region into the American socio-economy. The process of pacifying the area and building key American institutions continued into the early 1900s partly because of the difficulties involved in establishing authority over the great distance separating the region from centers of power. Unresolved issues of a local and international nature and the persistent problem of racial tension that militarization reinforced also contributed to the slow process of establishing U.S. authority in the region.

The period from 1895 to 1924 saw the transformation of the border region. Along with the economic and commercial changes caused by modernization, social and political shifts served as a backdrop to the story of authority building in West Texas. The reformist agendas that swept across the state with the election of Governor Charles A. Culberson in the mid-1890s, for instance, influenced the efforts to pacify the region and incorporate it into the cultural and political world of the United States. The governor mobilized the Texas Rangers to enforce the new policy against "vice," especially prizefighting and gambling, in West Texas. True to the independent spirit that had developed in the distant region, local officials garnered popular support for an effective challenge against the Rangers. At the turn of the twentieth century, larger issues of an international nature, including immigration and the Mexican Revolution, often brought local authorities in line with state policies that were re-defining relations between Mexico and the United States.

While the early efforts at pacifying the region and in securing American rule resulted in major conflicts, a number of new factors further complicated the process of building a new society. The Mexican Revolution, for example, had a significant impact on Texas, not merely in terms of armed conflicts along the Rio Grande, but also because border cities such as El Paso offered a haven to rival revolutionary groups from Mexico. They influenced Mexicans along the border to join the Mexican Revolution and to adopt critical views towards racial discrimination and their condition as a socially dominated group. Others were less ideologically inclined and joined the international movement because of personal grievances as well as a way to maintain friendship and kinship ties. The sweeping changes revealed the unavoidable ties between the two countries and, as a

result, the protection of American lives and property emerged as a serious concern for U.S. government officials and residents living along the border and in Mexico.

The Revolution threatened and disrupted American economic investments in Mexico, especially in northern Mexico where mines and other industries were largely owned by U.S. investors. Diplomatic uncertainty over the protection of private property and citizens was a critical problem for American investors and the U.S. government. The violence of the revolution also added untold numbers to the already large immigrant flow. The Revolution and the political exiles that joined the migration raised security concerns that complicated the incorporation of Mexicans into American society.

Increased immigration from Mexico, primarily a response to the industrialization of the regional economy of the Southwest and the violence associated with the Revolution that overflowed into Texas, frayed social relations. Opposition to immigration also involved nativists groups who claimed that the unregulated flow was increasing the population of Mexicans in the cities. They made xenophobic arguments of racial, cultural, and economic vulnerability. Restrictionist groups argued that Mexicans were not staying on the farms, but traveling to the towns and cities where they depressed wages and displaced Anglo workers.

David Montejano points out that these critics were concerned that growers did not care that their recruitment efforts were worsening economic conditions in the cities. The introduction of Mexican workers at a large scale eventually gave rise to a formidable restrictionist campaign. Law enforcement agencies such as the Texas Rangers and the Border Patrol were caught in the middle of the debate over immigration and often found themselves walking the fine line of negotiating different world views represented by

restrictionists and growers. The debate over immigration and the official challenge of mediating differences between growers and their critics was also part of the story of authority building in West Texas.

Comprehensive legislation passed in 1924 attempted to bridge the differences between restrictionists and growers. Immigration policy, such as the Immigration Act of 1924, became more restrictive and enforcement practices became stricter. The policy greatly reduced immigration from Europe by lowering their quota numbers and it established a permanent federal agency, the United States Border Patrol, to enforce the nation's immigration laws. The Border Patrol established its headquarters in El Paso, Texas, and originally only policed the U.S.-Mexican boundary. El Paso's role as the "only real labor depot" on the border reflected its significance as a point of convergence for immigrants and employers. This explains its selection as a central headquarters for the Border Patrol. Moreover, the pairing of El Paso and the Border Patrol positioned the agency to broker the labor demands by agriculturalists in the region. Border Patrolmen enforced the law but made sure that area growers had all the workers they needed at harvest time.

Problems associated with enforcing the National Prohibition Act of 1919 overshadowed the challenges posed by immigration. The insatiable thirst for contraband liquor inspired the illegal flow of alcoholic products from Mexico, especially in places like El Paso. Moreover, the popular taste for liquor and its prohibition created situations that challenged authority in very unique ways. Local authorities and otherwise law-abiding citizens from the border cities, for example, engaged in large-scale alcohol

smuggling. The smugglers, on the other hand, were mostly Mexicans. Mexican authorities also joined the illicit trade by serving as scouts and hired guns to protect the illegal cargo. The association of the trade with Mexicans, as well as, the violence that often erupted between U.S. law enforcement officials and the smugglers complicated matters even more by reinforcing the idea of the Mexican as a criminal. The increased vigilance that accompanied Prohibition between 1918 and 1933 also bred discontent among Mexicans, including local and federal officials, who often claimed that law enforcement officials violated their rights.

This study pays special attention to race relations between Mexicans and Anglos as well as between Mexico and the United States. The story of establishing order and building a border society included race as a means for defining social relations in West Texas and intergovernmental relations across the international border. Isolated events, such as the Santa Ysabel massacre, antagonized the Mexican community on both sides of the border and prompted violent responses from Anglos and local authorities. Law enforcement agencies reflected and reinforced local prejudice, some of which originated during the period of the Mexican-American War, the San Elizario Salt War, and the Mexican Revolution.

During the tumultuous years of the Mexican Revolution, the Texas Rangers allowed for their racial antipathies to influence their relationship with the Mexican community of West Texas. Battles with suspected bandits evolved from personal vendettas to indiscriminate violence towards innocent Mexican residents. The wholesale

murder of innocent Mexican men at El Porvenir reflected the categorization of the Mexican as the subject "other."

Race became even more important in defining social relations when authorities treated Mexicans as a defeated minority while ostensibly meting out justice in an impartial way. In the El Paso race riot of 1916, for instance, the U.S. Army reinforced segregation between Mexican residents in "Chihuahuita" and the rest of El Paso with the use of martial law and "dead lines." Army officials intended to use the "dead line" to put down the riot and isolate El Paso's vice industry within the Mexican district. The Mexican community, however, emerged as a subject "other".

This dissertation used a case study approach in order to acknowledge the important role that selected law enforcement bodies played in the development of a border society. As the state's primary police force throughout late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Texas Rangers carried out state initiatives in the region. The U.S. Army, on the other hand, enforced national policies regarding neutrality and sovereignty while bolstering defenses along the border. Military policies, of course, also involved at least one important intervention in Mexico. This left the National Guard to assume a greater role in peace-making along the border. Militarization also involved the Border Patrol, a permanent federal agency responsible for enforcing immigration and prohibition policies enacted during the time period.

Events such as the Chico Cano case, the race riot, the mobilization of the National Guard, and Prohibition presented special challenges to the different law enforcement agencies that sought to pacify and incorporate West Texas into American society. These

events represent specific experiences in the history of the Rangers, the U.S. Army, the National Guard, the Border Patrol, and local officials. They also reveal interchanges with the local population as official initiative triggered varied responses. A great disconnect between authority and the local population emerges and complicates its incorporation into the American socio-economic enclave.

The Texas Rangers played a critical role in the establishing authority in West Texas. The Rangers were first entrusted with clearing the land of Indians. Later, they assumed the responsibility of suppressing violence and disciplining the Mexican community. The Frontier Battalion and Special Ranger Force led the way beginning in the late nineteenth century. Both forces were created with distinct responsibility of protecting westward settlement from Indian depredations and suppressing banditry along the Mexican border. The Rangers continued to act as the state's primary police force during the early part of the twentieth century. One of its primary responsibilities was to suppress political activity among Mexicans and to act on the increasing number of raids planned on Mexican soil. Their overzealous activities earned the Rangers a reputation for being a violent police force that victimized Mexicans in Texas.

The Rangers in West Texas confronted unique circumstances that saw their relationship with locals change by end of the nineteenth century. As a representative of the state, the Rangers began to enforce the state's temperance initiatives which conflicted with local custom and practice. In the mid-1890s, Governor Charles A. Culberson initiated his progressive reform that included the banning of prizefighting and gambling in the state. The governor mobilized the Rangers to enforce the state's anti-prizefight

legislation in El Paso. Since most El Paso residents were invested in the entertainment industry, progressive reform disrupted the region's way of life. Moreover, local law enforcement officials generally perceived the presence of the Texas Rangers as an affront to their abilities. However, as the political landscape shifted towards a more progressive minded polity in 1903 so did the Rangers' role in the region. Problems associated with Mexican immigration and the Mexican Revolution changed the relationship of the Texas Rangers with local officials and West Texas residents. Increasingly, local Anglos came to see the Rangers as a necessary bulwark against violence associated with the Mexican Revolution.

The appearance of Captain John Hughes as the new head of Company "D" marked a shift in the local perception of the Texas Rangers in the region. Although concerns over border violence were foremost in the minds of many residents, the Rangers also influenced them by seeking more collaborative relationships with Anglos, as well as Mexicans. Hughes was able to nurture cooperative relationships with many of the authorities and ranchers in West Texas and Ciudad Juárez. For example, Hughes, along with other Ranger officers like Joe Sitters, developed a friendship with Francisco "Pancho" Villa. Hughes was also instrumental in building positive relationships with local Mexicans by working closely with many of them and by learning some Spanish. Hughes did this because he understood that the Mexican population in West Texas greatly outnumbered Anglos and often challenged local Anglo American authority.

The increasing violence threatened any hope of lasting racial peace and overshadowed friendly relations that Rangers like Hughes were able to develop.

Livestock thefts and border raids, in particular, plagued ranchers living in remote areas and they became increasingly suspicious of Mexicans in the area. Bandit gangs, on the other hand, were driven by two compelling motivations. They ransacked ranch properties to advance their financial interests and to obtain retribution for the injustices Anglos had caused on the Mexican population. Their actions, coupled with a popular disposition to see Mexicans in negative terms, encouraged Anglo ranchers and the larger society to believe that criminality was synonymous with being Mexican. All along, the Ranger treatment of Mexicans became harsher and more indiscriminate.

Many Rangers utilized humiliating and brutal tactics to deter banditry in the area. They had developed a reputation for killing Mexicans on trumped up charges and for attempting to "escape" before they reached the local jail. The harsh treatment exercised by the Rangers reinforced the distant and violent relationships between Mexicans and Anglos.

Bandit activity and Ranger excesses increased throughout the period of the Mexican Revolution. The case of Ranger Joe Sitters and the social bandit Chico Cano typified the violent struggle between Anglo authority and Mexican residents. Cano emerged as a protector of the Mexican people who sought retribution against the rich oppressors that subjugated his people. On the other hand, many residents and law enforcement authorities simply perceived Cano as a bandit and a threat to the social order.

Anglos generally categorized Mexicans as potential bandits or bandit supporters primarily because their communities often supported the bandits. Some of them believed

that Mexicans could not be trusted because they could not distinguish between a "friendly" Mexican from a bandit. The massacre at El Porvenir demonstrated the inconsiderate and even contemptuous view of Mexicans that characterized the work of the Rangers.

The Rangers' treatment of the Mexican community reflected long-standing distrust between Mexicans and Anglos in West Texas. They had been engaged in a tenuous and conflictual relationship since at least the time of the Texas War for secession and the Mexico-American War. The San Elizario Salt War of 1877 reminded everyone that racial ill-will still existed. The insurrection was finally subdued and the salt licks remained free to all residents. Nevertheless, the armed conflict demonstrated that race continued to define relations between Mexicans and Anglos.

The Mexican Revolution was an important backdrop to the tenuous relationship between Anglos and Mexicans in West Texas. Several contributing factors emerged throughout the conflict that deepened the divisions between the two communities. Many Anglo ranchers and residents in West Texas feared that reprisals from local Mexicans. This was evident when popular revolutionary leader Pascual Orozco was killed under suspicious circumstances in El Paso. Anglos in the small town of Sierra Blanca immediately took arms and patrolled the town for any Mexicans that might want to exact revenge on local Anglos. Army troops and National Guardsmen also reacted. They took to the streets of Chihuahuita in what was called by the mayor a "precautionary" effort because of rumors of an uprising. The feared uprising did not occur.

Wilson's recognition of Venustiano Carranza's government, coming months after the start of the San Diego revolt in deep South Texas, may have been the single most important event in the Revolution that affected life in West Texas. Villa's subsequent anti-American tirade fanned fears that many Anglos had been harboring since the outbreak of the Revolution. The climatic point was reached in January 1916 when Villa's soldiers killed the American engineers near Santa Ysabel, Chihuahua. Their bodies were immediately sent to El Paso where many Anglo residents sought justice under their own terms and marched to Chihuahuita seeking retribution.

Soldiers entered Chihuahuita and began to institute order in the district by declaring martial law. At this point, General John Pershing resurrected a Civil War prison guard tactic by imposing a "dead line." A perimeter was outlined and patrolled by the soldiers to keep Mexicans contained in their neighborhood. The military enforced "dead line" was full of meaning. Mexicans were to remain in their place under threat of violence, both from angry Anglos and concerned military officials and the policy carried the meanings of segregation and containment.

The Columbus raid raised the stakes even higher. It led the federal government to further militarize the border by mobilizing the National Guard. Congress passed the National Defense Act in 1916 which federalized all state militias and placed them under the command of the U.S. army. Their principle responsibilities were to protect property owners from ranch raids, enforce the country's neutrality policies, and organize surveillance networks to anticipate any incursions that might occur from Mexicans on both sides of the river.

The massive mobilization included over 100,000 guardsmen. This build-up, however, once again demonstrated that it was difficult for authorities to establish order on the West Texas border. The vast space, rough terrain, and limited manpower, the same obstacles that hampered the work of the Texas Rangers, limited the effectiveness of the National Guard. National Guard officers responded much like the Texas Rangers, that is, they organized civilian groups known as home guards to report suspected illegal activity or potential ranch raids. The National Guard, like the Texas Rangers, also treated Mexicans as potential threats, and in that way contributed to the anti-Mexican feelings that dominated West Texas.

The presence of the National Guard in West Texas, however, added a unique set of circumstances along the U.S.-Mexican border. Home guards, at times, abused their authority or supplied the Guard with misleading information with led to false accusations and misdirected actions against Mexicans. Commanding officers were constantly communicating to their units that special care and treatment should be undertaken with the Mexican population. The reports reflected that mistrust between Mexicans and Anglo authority persisted. A backlash to the presence of the National Guard was also seen in El Paso when policies directed at military installments directly affected local businessmen.

The National Guard contributed to the isolation of Chihuahuita when its soldiers forced city officials to place restrictions on the vice industry that included moving some of the businesses to other parts of town. Progressive initiatives intended to curb the excesses of military personnel in the vice industry brought economic hardship to business owners in El Paso's "Red Light" and downtown districts. This occurred when city and

military officials expanded the use of the 1916 “dead line” to include entertainment-based businesses in downtown El Paso. Soldiers were encouraged by churches and businesses outside the district to seek recreational activities in other parts of the city. Though vice was never eradicated from the city, the redirected patronage away from Chihuahuita further isolated the district. The National Guard’s presence along the U.S.-Mexico border disturbed social relations and failed to bridge the Mexican and Anglo communities.

The Border Patrol, like the National Guard, also faced difficulties on the border. Many of its problems stemmed from the fact that the agency assumed two major responsibilities in the border region. It was responsible for enforcing immigration law and, and after the passage of the Prohibition Act, the smuggling of contraband liquor. The Immigration Act of 1924 appropriated one-million dollars for its creation and established its headquarters in El Paso. The initial responsibility of the Border Patrol was to enforce the provisions of the act that included the restriction of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. A quota was set of two percent for each nationality group based on the 1890 U.S. census reports. The quota did little to affect the Mexican immigrant flow. Immigrants from Mexico were excluded from the restrictive rolls but were subject to fees, literacy tests, taxes, and undergo a medical examination. Despite increased restrictions on immigration the Border Patrol was overwhelmed by the immensity of the immigrant flow coming into the United States.

The Border Patrol paid little attention to illegal Mexican immigrants and focused much of their energy on enforcing customs regulations and prohibition laws. American prohibition was in full swing and much attention was given to it. Alcohol and alien

smuggling was a lucrative business and many were willing to go to any extent to protect their cargo. Violence resulted from this stubborn will and economic payoff. The insatiable appetite for contraband liquor in the United States and Mexico's willingness to supply it created an added obstacle to fully establish authority in West Texas. Though the liquor trade detracted the Border Patrol from its primary responsibility in the area of immigration, it continued to play an important role in both insuring that farmers had the workers they needed and in responding to the restrictionist calls for tighter immigration controls.

The Patrol walked a fine line when it came to enforcing immigration laws and distributing labor to U.S. farmers. Employers, such as railroad companies and growers, worked in tandem with the Border Patrol to satisfy their labor needs and regulate the workers' movement. Amendments made to restrictive immigration policies that allowed for Mexican immigrant contract labor satisfied the growers' needs. However, Mexican mobility was regulated since employers and immigration officials made sure laborers stayed on specified sites and returned to their homeland when their contracts expired. This reflected how the Border Patrol facilitated labor distribution while enforcing immigration policy.

West Texas became a major supply route for much of the United States' agricultural and industrial needs. The border region boasted the highest concentration of Mexicans in the southwest. Moreover, El Paso's proximity to a large pool of Mexican labor allowed American corporations to recruit directly at El Paso without the help of intermediary labor agents. Industrial and agricultural industries tapped into El Paso's

labor supply throughout the 1910s and 1920s. The establishment of the Border Patrol as both a labor facilitator and immigration officer reflected the mediating role the agency had in placing the Mexican within the socio-economic enclave of the United States.

The overall relationship between law enforcement agencies and local communities contributed to the establishment of racially divided communities. Singly and collectively, the agencies reinforced these divisions at they same time that they established authority and helped incorporate the region into the U.S. socio-economy. At the same time, however, they reinforced problems, particularly the racialization of social relations in West Texas. The divisions between Mexicans and Anglos were, in part, militarily enforced. General Pershing's declaration of martial law and "dead lines" reinforced a policy of segregation that isolated the Mexicans in "Chihuahuita." The extended uses of the "dead line" policy to contain El Paso's vice industry near the Mexican sector and restrict the military's patronage further hampered the integration of the community into the larger socio-economic fabric of the region.

The Rangers, on the other hand, introduced even harsher law enforcement. Their wholesale murders of innocent civilians at El Porvenir and the use of crude justice is a case in point. In the early years of the twentieth century, the skirmishes between the Texas Rangers and the alleged Mexican bandits were especially important in suggesting that the Mexican community was given to criminal behavior to a greater extent than the rest of the population in West Texas. Anglo residents in West Texas were thus encouraged to consider all Mexicans as potential bandits

Immigration policy also marginalized the Mexican. Congress, on the one hand, exempted Mexicans from the restrictive policies of the twentieth century and flooded the Southwest and other parts of the country with labor supplies that often exceeded actual labor needs. The labor surplus mostly benefited growers. Immigration policy, of course, did not address what happened to the workers who were arriving by the hundreds of thousands. Employers, especially southwestern farmers, consistently assigned them the lower-paying and lower-skilled jobs regardless of prior training or experience. Government agencies like the Border Patrol actually participated in this process by allowing immigrants to cross relatively undisturbed during the harvest season. The Border Patrol also promoted the idea that the government was responsive to the pleas of the restrictionists by occasionally conducting raids or by stepping up their apprehension activities. The exercise of authority in West Texas, in other words, reinforced social divisions in West Texas and contributed to their racialization.

This dissertation has also placed the emergence of the Mexican subject "other" within a historical context. Immigration policy aimed at both growers and restrictionist groups marginalized the Mexican. On one hand, the Mexican laborer is exempted from the restrictive policies passed in the early part of the twentieth century to satisfy the labor demands of growers and industries throughout the southwest. However, their status remained largely at the lower-paying echelons of labor inhibiting their social upward mobility. On the other hand, the influx of Mexican immigrants threatened the cultural homogeneity preserved by nativist groups. Restrictive policies such as head taxes and medical evaluations coupled with the enforcement powers of the United States Border

Patrol were thought to preserve Anglo cultural homogeneity. The racialized Mexican as neither black nor white complicated the racial hierarchy of American society.[313] Their increasing population numbers alarmed the Anglo community which projected its fears by vilifying Mexicans as the cause for social decay and degeneracy. Full incorporation of the Mexican into American cultural enclave was disrupted by intense moments of crisis and fear of American power displacement.

This study makes several contributions to the history of militarization and borderlands history. First, this study contributes to the history of militarization in West Texas and El Paso by examining the experience of different agencies. The Texas Rangers, U.S. Army, the National Guard, and the Border Patrol shared similar experiences that included resistance and conflict. However, each institution affected social relations between Anglos and Mexicans in unique ways that complicated the pacification process of the region.

An examination of each institution that was mobilized to West Texas and El Paso exposes its direct impact on social relations. For example, the Texas Rangers saw their role change over time. At the close of the nineteenth century, the Texas Rangers enforced state policies that disrupted the local economy and social practices of El Paso. As a result, the independent minded city perceived the presence of the Rangers as an outside interference and an affront to local authority. At the turn of the twentieth century and under new leadership, the Rangers sought collaborative relationships with both Anglo and Mexican residents, especially with Mexican revolutionary figures like Pancho Villa.

[313] David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1987), pp. 179-196.

However, the overarching circumstances stemming from the Mexican Revolution overshadowed these relationships.

Rangers took on an additional set of circumstances stemming largely from the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution. For example, banditry along the Texas-Mexico border increased significantly throughout the Revolution. Some were inspired by revolutionary thought and others pursued retributive measures for injustices stemming from past conflicts. Nonetheless, as Rangers chased after the bandits and their confrontations grew more violent the tensions between the Anglo and Mexican communities grew increasingly more complex as banditry became associated with the greater Mexican community. Mexican communities on both sides of the river were suspected of aiding the bandits and as a result, the Mexican population was vilified and experienced indiscriminate violence at the hands of the Rangers and ranchers in the area. The actions of the Rangers and bandits had a direct impact on the social relations between Anglo and Mexican residents in West Texas.

In another example, the U.S. Army had a unique impact on social relations between the two ethnic communities. The military during times of intense crisis, especially the El Paso race riot in 1916, enacted rigid and strict enforcement of separate communities. The "dead line" marked and enforced boundaries between Anglo and Mexican residents in El Paso and to a lesser degree between Mexico and the United States. Vigilant measures sought by the U.S. Army enacted methods of control that kept Mexican residents separated from the rest of the city. These measures exercised by the U.S. Army and Texas Rangers; for example, offer a particular look at how militarization affected social relations in West Texas and El Paso.

This dissertation also underscores West Texas and El Paso as a unique region. The area was a major thoroughfare for goods, ideas, and the movement of people and groups. This politicized and agitated the already tenuous relations resonating in the area. At the same time, these relationships were elevated to an international level because the cities were major prizes for various groups including those directly involved with the Mexican Revolution. El Paso served as a safe haven for revolutionary factions to organize operations, recruit sympathizers, and purchase necessary supplies. Ciudad Juárez, on the other hand, was a critical staging point for battles and access to goods. El Paso as a revolutionary center, however, was not the only factor that defined the region as unique.

People in the region were accustomed to making independent decisions and viewed adverse policies from the state and federal government as outside interference. The independent spirit manifested during the intense militarization period seen at the turn of the twentieth century. At times, the city saw both Anglos and Mexicans working together to resist policy that disrupted their way of life. In other instances, however, the independent spirit was seen by Mexican residents who resisted the encroachment of Anglos and authority figures. Nevertheless, the series of events, the militarization of the region, and the reaction by its residents underscore that West Texas and El Paso offer a unique challenge to militarization and the development of authority.

In this study, a close examination of the El Paso race riot is offered. The analysis illustrates how social relations changed as a result of militarization. The military enforced policy of the “dead line” instituted strict and rigid divisions between the Anglo

and Mexican communities. One of the more poignant consequences of the policy was the discipline and control of movement by citizens within El Paso and between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. I am especially interested in metaphors like the "dead line" and plan to pursue it in future work.

Lastly, this study offers a framework that takes in account of local experience and the larger political world beyond. My study looks at how agencies affected social relations and how larger events impacted the way the agencies behaved. In addition, the larger context is couched into a localized study that adds another perspective on changing social relations. A full appreciation of immigration, the Mexican Revolution, and Prohibition cannot be achieved without understanding the ongoing activities that defied authority at the local level.

The analysis provided by this study compliments the work done by borderlands scholars Mario García and Oscar Martínez. It reemphasizes the significance of El Paso and the surrounding area as an important locale for economic development, political activity, and social change. Second, the periodization used in this study reflects the important changes that took place in the region and were highlighted by the various works by García and Martínez. Lastly, this study underscores the interdependent nature of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez that is repeated in their works. Although García and Martínez discuss events such as the Mexican Revolution and the impact of immigration and labor to the economy of the Southwest and northern Mexico, little attention is given to the militarization of the region. This study supplements their work by focusing on the development of authority and militarization.

The long running process of militarization and conflict in the region provides another lens into the complexity of social and political relationships along the border. An examination of each border institution underscores that unique and varied approaches were taken to incorporate and pacify the region. In addition, the continued conflict associated with the militarization took on an ethnic and international nature. As a result of this process, social relations between Anglos and Mexicans became far more complex and varied across time and circumstance.

The case studies discussed here demonstrate that an intensified and militarized context supplied by socio-economic change, policy, and conflict deepened divisions between Anglos and Mexicans in West Texas. The coupling of an intense time period and militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border helped define racial and ethnic relations. Moreover, the incorporation of Mexicans during times of crisis and reinforced militarization was complicated as events such as the Mexican Revolution increased political and criminal activity and national security issues became a concern for the United States. The difficulty in establishing an effective authority consequently defined Mexicans as a subject "other." Each institution of authority and vigilante group discussed in this study reinforced and deepened divisions between Anglos and Mexicans in West Texas. Scholars, such as David Montejano, have argued that changes in the economic and political structure in Texas molded race relations between Anglos and Mexicans.[314] However, by peering into a narrow lens of individual authority figures entrusted with the

[314] Ibid.

responsibility of enforcing policies and castigation we are able to understand how segregation and stigmatization was reinforced.

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Vita

Miguel Antonio Levario was born in El Paso, Texas on June 17, 1977, the son of Daniel P. Levario and Catalina Levario. After completing his work at Cathedral High School, El Paso, Texas, in 1995, he entered the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1997, he transferred to the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Notre Dame in May 1999. In September 1999 he entered the graduate program at Stanford University. He received his Master of Arts degree from Stanford University in June 2001. Shortly thereafter in August 2001, he entered the Graduate School of the University of Texas at Austin. During the following years, he was employed as a United States and Mexican American history instructor at the University of Texas at Austin and Austin Community College in Austin, Texas. Also, he published a book review in the scholarly journal, *Aztlán*.

Permanent address: 11900 Stonehollow Dr. #1036, Austin, Texas, 78758

This dissertation was typed by the author.